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WOMEN OF FASHION.

Adam

WOMEN OF FASHION

AND

REPRESENTATIVE WOMEN IN LETTERS AND SOCIETY.

A SERIES OF

BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL STUDIES.

BY

H. DAVENPORT ADAMS,

AUTHOR OF

"THE ARCTIC WORLD," "THE MEDITERRANEAN ILLUSTRATED," "THE NILE WORLD," ETC.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

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MADAME D'ARBLAY.

I.

MACAULAY speaks of the appearance of Madame D'Arblay,—better known, perhaps, by her maiden name of Fanny Burney,—in the ranks of female writers as an important epoch in the literary history of England. And the truth of this remark will not be questioned by any person who remembers that she was preceded by Aphra Behn and Mrs. Lennox, none of whose works have lived or deserved to live; that most of the popular novels before 'Evelina' were such as no woman ought to have written, and no lady could have written; and that the horror and hatred with which fiction was regarded by the religious world, or by decent society generally, were not without the fullest justification. Such novels as were not indecent, and such were few, would now be thrown aside with contempt by every

schoolboy. Sheridan has happily ridiculed them in his comedy of 'The Rivals.' "Could you not get," inquires Miss Lydia Languish, of her servant, 'The Reward of Constancy?'" "No, indeed, ma'am." "Nor 'The False Connexion?'" "No, indeed, ma'am." "Nor 'The Mistakes of the Heart?'" "Ma'am, as ill luck would have it, Mr. Bull said Miss Sukey Saunter had just fetched it away. . . ." "Well, child, what have you brought me?" "Oh! here, ma'am. This is 'The Gordian Knot.'... Here are 'The Tears of Sensibility,' and this is 'The Memoirs of a Lady of Quality.'" And he puts into the mouth of Sir Anthony Absolute an expression of opinion which, undoubtedly, was endorsed by all sober fathers and husbands, and all right-minded mothers and wives:—"A circulating library in a town is as an evergreen tree of diabolical knowledge! It blossoms through the year! and, depend on it, that they who are so fond of handling the leaves, will long for the fruit at last." But after the publication of 'Evelina' and 'Cecilia,' Miss Burney might rightly have said, We have changed all that. She taught the reading world that a novel might be decorous and yet interesting; she demonstrated to writers of fiction that it might be and ought to

be a work of art. "She first showed," says Macaulay, "that a tale might be written in which both the fashionable and the vulgar life of London might be exhibited with great force, and with broad comic humour, and which yet should not contain a single line inconsistent with rigid morality, or even with virgin delicacy. She took away the reproach which lay on a most useful and delightful species of composition. She vindicated the right of her sex to an equal share in a fine and noble province of letters." It is not too much to say that to Miss Burney we owe, more or less directly, the masterpieces of Miss Austen and Miss Edgeworth, of Charlotte Brontë, Mrs. Gaskell, Mrs. Oliphant, and George Eliot. As is the case with many pioneers, she has been eclipsed by her successors. Readers of 'Adam Bede' and 'Jane Eyre'—even readers of 'Castle Rackrent,' and 'Pride and Prejudice,'—will hardly care for the humours of 'Cecilia' and 'Evelina.' The new school of novelists paints with a more powerful hand and in deeper colours, on a wider canvas, and from a broader field of vision. Miss Burney could no more have achieved the subtle analysis of character and motives which we find in 'Villette,' than her readers could have appreciated it. But because she

has been left far behind in the race, it must not be forgotten that it was she who pointed out the road. And the thousands and tens of thousands of English-speaking men and women who have been cheered or taught or amused by the successful efforts of the later novelists owe an immense debt of gratitude to the unassuming lady who accomplished for the English novel that work of restoration and purification which Jeremy Collier accomplished for the English drama; and accomplished it in a "better way."

And if Fanny Burney's novels are not read now, it is not because they are not worth reading. They have been pushed aside by works of greater force and passion, and deeper interest; but they have merits of their own, and those merits are considerable. As one of her successors says, their charm has not departed with the manners they painted. They still supply us with lively, striking, and faithful pictures of English society during the last quarter of the 18th century. They still amuse by their delicate delineation of the weaknesses and absurdities of men and women. Miss Burney strikes no powerful chords of feeling; she never rises above sentiment; but as she knew her own power, and its

exact limits, she never undertakes anything which she does not carry out; and we read her two great fictions with a pleasant sense of satisfaction. The story is interesting; the situations are well-contrived; the characters are conceived with insight, and sketched with firmness. She paints only manners; but these she paints with rare delicacy and finesse. Her imagination was not active; but she had a fine sense of humour. With Macaulay we agree in refusing her a place in the highest rank of art; but we think that in the rank to which she belonged she has had few equals, and no superior. Dr. Johnson called her a "character-monger"; and the phrase is as just as it is expressive. Her strength in fiction, like that of Ben Jonson in the drama, lay in the exhibition of human foibles and passions. Each of her characters is the embodiment of some particular humour, and each is as strongly marked by his speech as Dickens's characters are distinguished by their peculiarities of dress or gesture. It follows that, like Ben Jonson, she was most successful in comedy. She had no capacity of tragic passion. Macaulay thinks she might have attained distinction in the pathetic; but her pathos does not seem to us to rise above the level of that with which

genteel comedy makes us familiar. And it could hardly be otherwise, considering her deficiency in imagination.

With these introductory remarks we pass on to a brief sketch of the life of Madame D'Arblay, who may fairly be considered a "Representative Woman."

She was descended from the Shropshire family of Macburney, which appears to have been connected with the O'Byrnes, of Wicklow. At one time possessed of considerable estates, the MacBurneys had shown a truly Irish ingenuity in getting rid of them. A Mr. James MacBurney ran away with an actress, married her, and was cut off with a shilling. His father, in revenge, married a second time, choosing for his partner no other than his cook, by whom he had a son and heir named Joseph. The latter turned out a prodigal, and soon placed himself on a level with his disinherited brother. The latter, dropping the initial syllable of the family name, settled at Chester as a portrait-painter; the former betook himself to Norfolk, and turned dancing-master. There we take leave of him. But of James Burney we cannot quite so quickly dispose. He married;

and his wife brought him a son named Charles. Charles, well known as the author of a 'History of Music,' became the father of two children, a son and a daughter; and thus James Burney, the portrait-painter, lived to be grandfather of the author of 'Evelina.'

Charles Burney, apprenticed to a musician in London, found a liberal patron in a brilliant man of fashion, Fulk Greville; but was compelled by ill health to abandon the prospects of a successful career which this good fortune opened up to him, and accept the post of organist at the sea-side town of Lynn. It was here, on the 13th of June, 1752, that Fanny Burney was born. In her early childhood she gave no sign of genius. She was demure, silent, and so reserved that the friends of the family called her "the old lady;" while, as at eight years old she did not know her letters, her brothers and sisters preferred to designate her "the dunce."

In 1760 Mr. Burney removed from Lynn to London, where he took up his abode in Poland Street, a dull thoroughfare opening out of Oxford Street. Afterwards he resided in St. Martin's Street, in the house which had formerly been occupied by the illustrious Newton. In 1761 he lost his wife. At this time

his family consisted of two sons, James, a midshipman, who in later years rose to the rank of Admiral; Charles, a lad at the Charterhouse School; and four daughters, two of whom were sent to Paris to receive their education, while the others remained at home. Thus Fanny was left, in a great measure, to educate herself. Her father was exceedingly affectionate and kindly-natured, but his time was occupied by tuition. His work began at 7 in the morning, and lasted until 11 at night. So absorbing were his occupations that he often dined in the hackney coach which carried him from one pupil to another, and for this purpose always provided himself with a tin box of sandwiches and a flask of wine and water. The reader will suppose that he might have sent Frances where he had sent her sisters to be educated; but he seems to have believed that she would incur greater risks of perversion to Romanism, owing to her strong affection for her grandmother, a Roman Catholic. So she was left to her own devices. She learned to read, and to take a pleasure in reading; but until one of her sisters returned from Paris, was unable to write. Of book-knowledge, therefore, she acquired but little. As soon as she could write,

however, she began to compose little poems, tales, and fancies, though in a character illegible to every one but herself. This exercise accustomed her to think, and to marshal her ideas in due order. Admitted at all times to her father's table, she listened eagerly to the conversation of the guests who assembled round it; and the conversation was well-fitted to inform her mind, and to develop her intellectual powers. For Burney's cultivated tastes and amiable manners, had procured him admittance into the most distinguished literary circles. At Lynn he had gained the favour of Dr. Johnson by the zeal with which he praised always and everywhere the 'English Dictionary'; and the acquaintance being renewed and strengthened in London, the moralist and the musician frequently prolonged their winter-night conversations until the candles had burned down in the sockets, and the fire sank into its last embers.

Dr. Burney's society also included Nollekens the sculptor, a conversationalist of no mean order; Dr. Armstrong, a wit as well as a physician; Arthur Young, once famous as an agricultural authority; Mrs. Greville, the authoress of the elegant 'Ode to Indifference"; Mason the poet, dramatist, and friend

of Gray; Sir Robert Strange, the engraver, and his laughter-loving wife; Dr. Hawkesworth, the essayist, and industrious man of letters; Mr. Crisp, a gentleman by birth and breeding, and the constant friend of the Burney family; and the versatile Garrick. The last-named was not the least welcome, and while his sallies of wit delighted the elder members of the brilliant circle, his powers of mimicry were freely exercised for the amusement of the younger.

Fanny Burney, with her quick eye for the humours of mankind, found here a constant field for observation. But that nothing might be wanting to her study of human character, the house in St. Martin's Street,—presided over in due time by a second Mrs. Burney,—became the rendezvous of the musical world of London. In Macaulay's picturesque phrase, the greatest Italian singers who visited England, regarded Dr. Burney as the dispenser of fame in their art, and exerted themselves to obtain his suffrage. Hence he was able to give, with scarcely any outlay, concerts of the choicest excellence. His musical reunions were all "the rage," and attracted peers and peeresses, statesmen, men and women of fashion, and the lions of the season, such as Bruce, the

Abyssinian traveller, fresh from the sources of the Blue Nile, and Omai, the gentle Tahitian, whom Captain Cook had brought from his far-off island, and Cowper celebrated in tuneful verse. On one of these occasions, — probably a fair specimen of the rest, — Burney's little drawing-room contrived to accommodate Lord Sandwich, the "Jemmy Twitcher" of the poet, the lover of Miss Ray, and the First Lord of the Admiralty; Lord and Lady Mount Edgcumbe, Lord Ashburnham, Lord Mulgrave, a renowned connoisseur, and M. de Guignes, the French Ambassador, of whom some said that he was more successful in love than in diplomacy, and owed more to his handsome person than his powers of mind. But the great show of the night (says Macaulay) was the Russian Ambassador, Count Orloff, whose gigantic figure was all in a blaze with jewels, and whose Scythian ferocity could be detected beneath a thin varnish of French politeness. As he stalked about the small apartment, almost brushing the ceiling with his *toupée*, the girls whispered to each other, with mingled admiration and horror, "that he was the favoured lover of his august mistress; that he had borne the chief part in the revolution to which she owed her throne; and that his huge hands, now glittering with

diamond rings, had given the last squeeze to the windpipe of her unfortunate husband."

With such abundant material to work upon, we need not wonder that Frances continued her literary efforts. The shy girl of sixteen, who never opened her lips "in company," was carefully noting the peculiarities of the motley throng that passed before her, and already making use of them in efforts at fictitious narrative. In London her "study" was a little playroom up two pair of stairs, which sheltered the toys of the younger children. During the annual excursions of the family to Lynn, she took refuge in a summer-house called "the Cabin"; and there, in secret, read to the favoured ears of her sister Susannah, the premature productions of her lively fancy.

Though she took every precaution to escape discovery, she could not long conceal her occupation from her mother-in-law's vigilant eye; and as the work of authorship was considered disgraceful to a woman, she underwent a serious but well-meant reprimand for wasting her time in so discreditable a manner. It is probable that Fanny was not convinced, but her sense of duty prompted obedience to

her mother-in-law's strictures. So she collected all her precious compositions, and committed them to the flames in the presence of her weeping sister, Susannah. Agamemnon, when he offered up his daughter Iphigenia, made no greater sacrifice.

She now took to her needle with exemplary assiduity, and hemmed and stitched from morn till dewy eve. But she could not repress the workings of her fancy. She endeavoured to satisfy herself by keeping a journal; in vain. Among the incremated MSS. had been the 'History of Caroline Evelyn'; and in spite of herself, her truant invention would delight in the conception of the perplexing situations into which it was possible to place the said Caroline's daughter; highly connected on the father's side, linked to vulgarity on the mother's, and thus exposed to antagonistic influences. She saw with what a crowd of strange characters the motherless beauty might be surrounded; the rude fop, the coarse sea-captain, the Scotch poet, lean as his own rugged hills, the aged coquette, the silversmiths on Snow Hill, the handsome hero; and she could not refrain from committing to paper, after it had been wholly composed in her memory, the story of 'Evelina; or, a Young Lady's Entrance into the World.'

Writing, however, was a difficult task, from the demands made upon her time and her pen by her father, who was then engaged in collecting the materials for his great work, 'The General History of Music.' In the summer of 1770, during his absence on a continental tour, Fanny obtained some months of leisure for her own studies and compositions; but on her father's return in the spring of 1771, she was again employed as his principal amanuensis in preparing for the press his narrative of his travels. He set out soon afterwards on another tour of musical research in Germany and the low countries. Meantime, the family resided at Lynn and at Chesington, where Fanny gradually arranged and linked together the disjointed scraps and fragments of her story. But it was not until 1776 that the 'History of Music' was published, and that Fanny found leisure to give 'Evelina' its final touches. She was then seized with "an odd inclination to see it in print," and transcribing the precious manuscript in a feigned hand, she made an effort, while preserving an incognito, to dispose of it to Dodsley, the celebrated bookseller. He declined looking at anything anonymous; and her brother Charles then carried it to a publisher, named Lowndes, in Fleet Street. He

avowed himself willing to print and publish it; but here Fanny's filial scruples intervened, and she shrank from completing the contract without her father's consent. Seizing a favourable moment, she told him, with many blushes, that she had written a book, and that she wished, with his permission, to publish it anonymously, but that he must not ask to see the manuscript. We are told that his amazement at this avowal was even surpassed by his amusement. His laugh was so gay, that Fanny lost all her fears and embarrassment, and heartily joined in it. He pronounced the scheme as innocent as it was whimsical; advised her to be careful in preserving her anonymity; and dropped the subject, without even asking the name of the book. Macaulay expends a good deal of grave morality on what he considers to have been Dr. Burney's reprehensible carelessness. On so serious an occasion, he thinks it was his duty to have given his best advice to his daughter; to prevent her from publishing the book if, on examination, he found it a bad one, and if it were a good one, to see that she sold it for an adequate sum. All this may be true; but Dr. Burney evidently took it as a joke, and had no idea that the demure Fanny had written a great novel. He was asked not to

interfere, and he complied with the request. So the bargain was concluded. For £20 Mr. Lowndes became the possessor of 'Evelina,' which made its appearance in the ensuing January, 1778.

"This year," says its author, in her Diary, "was ushered in by a grand and most important event! At the latter end of January, the literary world was favoured with the first publication of the ingenious learned, and most profound Fanny Burney! I doubt not but this memorable affair will, in future times, mark the period whence chronologers will date the zenith of the polite arts in this island!

"This admirable authoress has named her most elaborate performance, 'Evelina; or, a Young Lady's Entrance into the World.'

"Perhaps this may seem rather a bold attempt and title for a female whose knowledge of the world is very confined, and whose inclinations, as well as situation, incline her to a private and domestic life. All I can urge is, that I have only presumed to trace the accidents and adventures to which a 'young woman' is liable; I have not pretended to show the world what it generally is, but what it appears to a girl of seventeen: and so far as that, surely any girl who is past seventeen may safely do? The motto of

my excuse shall be taken from Pope's 'Temple of Fame':—

> 'In every work, regard the writer's end;
> None e'er can compass more than they intend.'"

With whatever feelings Miss Burney might afterwards regard the publication of her first book, it is certain that at the time she was filled with considerable apprehension. She dreaded the criticism of her friends and of the public, and when on this point she was reassured, she seems to have cherished a strange kind of distaste to the publicity in which she had involved herself, or rather her offspring. "I have an exceeding odd sensation," she writes, "when I consider that it is now in the power of *any* and *every* body to read what I so carefully hoarded even from my best friends, till this last month or two; and that a work which was so lately lodged, in all privacy, in my bureau, may now be seen by every butcher and baker, cobbler and tinker, throughout the three kingdoms, for the small tribute of threepence."

The progress of 'Evelina,' however, was slow at first. Lowndes, the publisher, was not a man of much influence; the book had no well-known name

'Bath Guide,' others whispered that Horace Walpole could tell all about it. Sir Joshua Reynolds, who had ceased from his constant labours to read the 'novel of the season,' protested he would give fifty pounds to know the author. Not less curious was Edmund Burke, who had begun to read it one morning at seven, and sat up all night to finish it. At last, Dr. Burney went to call upon Mrs. Thrale at Streatham. What ensued is related by Evelina in her diary:—

"He took the opportunity, when they were alone together, of saying that upon her recommendation he had himself, as well as my mother, been reading 'Evelina.'

"'Well!' cried she, and is it not a very pretty book? and a very clever book? and a very comical book?'

"'Why,' answered he, ''tis well enough; but I have something to tell you about it.'

"'Well? what?' cried she; 'has Mrs. Cholmondeley found out the author?'

"'No,' returned he; 'not that I know of, but *I* believe that *I* have, though but very lately.'

"'Well, pray let's hear!' cried she, eagerly, 'I want to know him of all things.'

"How my father must laugh at the *him!* He then, however, undeceived her in regard to that particular, by telling her it was '*our Fanny!*' for she knows all about our family, as my father talks to her of his domestic concerns without any reserve.

"A hundred handsome things, of course, followed; and she afterwards read some of the comic parts to Dr. Johnson, Mr. Thrale, and whoever came near her. How I should have quivered had I been there! but they tell me that Dr. Johnson laughed as heartily as my father himself did."

What Mrs. Thrale knew, all the world soon knew, and great was the wonder when it was found that the novel which had won so great and such deserved approval by its lively sketches of character, and its incisive analysis of human follies, was the work of a demure and silent young lady. The sensation produced has been almost equalled in our own time by the astonishment that arose on the discovery of the authorship of 'Jane Eyre.' But, nowadays, the world has so much to talk about. The daily papers supply it with a succession of fresh topics, and engage its interest for revolutions in the Sandwich Islands and social innovations among the Eskimos. To-day's wonder treads on the heels of yesterday's,

and in its turn will be displaced by to-morrow's. A century ago the case was different. It took a week, a fortnight, a month, for a piece of news to obtain general diffusion. People had time to discuss it in every shape; to take it up again and again; to gather the opinion of their neighbours upon it; to make it the subject of the coffee-house chat or the drawing-room conversation. So 'Evelina' and its author remained for a long time the object of the curiosity and the admiration of the town; and Fanny Burney had leisure not only to taste of the delights of fame, but thoroughly to enjoy them. There was no risk of her immediate supersession by a new favourite.

She records in her Diary her first interview with Dr. Johnson, then the acknowledged dictator of the commonwealth of letters:—

"Soon after we were seated,"—this was at Streatham Park, the seat of Mr. Thrale, now desecrated by a railway,—"the great man entered. I have so true a veneration for him, that the very sight of him inspires me with delight and reverence, notwithstanding the cruel infirmities to which he is subject; for he has almost perpetual convulsive movements, either of his hands, lips, feet, or knees, and sometimes of all together.

"Mrs. Thrale introduced me to him, and he took his place. We had a noble dinner, and a most elegant dessert. Dr. Johnson, in the middle of dinner, asked Mrs. Thrale what was in some little pies that were near him.

"'Mutton,' answered she, 'so I don't ask you to eat any, because I know you despise it.'

"'No, madam, no,' cried he; 'I despise nothing that is good of its sort; but I am too proud now to eat of it. Sitting by Miss Burney makes me very proud to-day!' . . .

". . . He said that Sir John Hawkins and he once belonged to the same club, but that as he eat no supper after the first night of his admission, he desired to be excused paying his share.

"'And was he excused?'

"'O, yes; for no man is angry at another for being inferior to himself! we all scorned him, and admitted his plea. For my part I was such a fool as to pay my share for wine, though I never tasted any. But Sir John was a most *unclubable* man!'

"How delighted was I to hear this master of languages so unaffectedly and sociably and good-naturedly make words, for the promotion of sport and good-humour!

"'And this,' continued he, 'reminds me of a gentleman and lady with whom I travelled once; I suppose I must call them gentleman and lady, according to form, because they travelled in their own coach and four horses. But at the first inn where we stopped, the lady called for—a pint of ale! and when it came, quarreled with the waiter for not giving full measure.—Now, Madame Duval [a character in 'Evelina'] could not have done a grosser thing!'

"Oh, how everybody laughed! and to be sure I did not glow at all, nor munch fast, nor look on my plate, nor lose any part of my usual composure! But how grateful do I feel to this dear Dr. Johnson, for never naming me and the book as belonging one to the other, and yet making an allusion that showed his thoughts led to it, and, at the same time, that seemed to justify the character as being natural! But, indeed, the delicacy I met with from him, and from all the Thrales, was yet more flattering to me than the praise with which I have heard they have honoured my book."

Yet another quotation: a breakfast scene:—

"Dr. Johnson, as usual, came late into the

library; he was in high spirits, and full of mirth and sport. I had the honour of sitting next to him; and now, all at once, he flung aside his reserve, thinking, perhaps, that it was time I should fling aside mine.

"'Mrs. Thrale told him that she intended taking me to Mr. T——'s.'

"'So you ought, madam,' cried he; 'tis your business to be cicerone to her.'

"Then suddenly he snatched my hand, and kissed it.

"'Ah!' he added, 'they will little think what a tartar you carry to them!'

"'No, that they won't!' cried Mrs. Thrale; 'Miss Burney looks so meek and so quiet, nobody would suspect what a comical girl she is; but I believe she has a great deal of malice at heart.'

"'Oh, she's a toad!' cried the doctor, laughing—'a sly young rogue! with her *Smiths* and her *Braughtons!*' . . .

". . . A few minutes after, he put his hand on my arm, and shaking his head, exclaimed,

"'Oh, you are a sly little rogue!—what a Holborn beau have you drawn!'

"'Ay, Miss Burney,' said Mrs. Thrale, the

Holborn beau is Dr. Johnson's favourite; and we have all your characters by heart, from Mr. Smith up to Lady Louisa.'

"'Oh, Mr. Smith, Mr. Smith is the man!' cried he, laughing violently. 'Harry Fielding never drew so good a character! such a fine varnish of low politeness!—such a struggle to appear a gentleman! Madam, there is no character better drawn anywhere, in any book or by any author.'

"I almost poked myself under the table. Never did I feel so delicious a confusion since I was born! But he added a great deal more, only I cannot recollect his exact words, and I do not choose to give him mine." . . .

"'I assure you,' said Mrs. Thrale, 'nobody can do your book more justice than Dr. Johnson does; and yet do you remember, sir, how unwilling you were to read it? He took it up, just looked at the first letter, and then put it away, and said, 'I don't think I have any taste for it!' but when he was going to town, I put the first volume into the coach with him; and then, when he came home, the very first words he said to me were, 'Why, Madam, this Evelina is a charming creature!'—and then he teased me to know whom she married, and what became of her,—and I

gave him the rest. For my part, I used to read it in bed, and could not part with it; I laughed at the second, and cried at the third; but what a trick was that of Dr. Burney's, never to let me know whose it was till I had read it! Suppose it had been something I had not liked! Oh, it was a vile trick!'

"'No, madam, not at all!' cried the doctor, 'for in that case you would never have known; all would have been safe, for he would neither have told you who wrote it, nor Miss Burney what you said of it.'

"Some time after the doctor began laughing to himself, and then, suddenly turning to me, he called out, '*Only think, Polly! Miss has danced with a lord!*'

"'Ah, poor Evelina!' cried Mrs. Thrale, 'I see her now in Kensington Gardens. What she must have suffered! Poor girl! what fidgets she must have been in! And I know Mr. Smith, too, very well:—I always have him before me at the Hampstead Ball, dressed in a white coat, and a tambour waistcoat, worked in green silk. Poor Mr. Seward! Mr. Johnson made him so mad t'other day! "Why, Seward," said he, "how smart you are dressed!

why you only want a tambour waistcoat to look like Mr Smith!" But I am very fond of Lady Louisa; I think her as well drawn as any character in the book; so fine, so affected, so languishing; and, at the same time, so insolent!'

Shortly afterwards, the great man "seated himself upon a sofa, and calling to me, said, 'Come,—Evelina,—come and sit by me.'

"I obeyed; and he took me almost in his arms, that is, one of his arms, for one would go three times, at least, round me,—and, half-laughing, half serious, he charged me to 'be a good girl!'

"'But, my dear,' continued he, with a very droll look, 'what makes you so fond of the Scotch. I don't like you for that; I hate these Scotch, and so must you. I wish Braughton had sent the dog to jail! That Scotch dog Macartney.'

"'Why, sir,' said Mrs. Thrale, 'don't you remember he says he would, but that he should get nothing by it?'

"'Why, ay, true,' cried the doctor, see-sawing very solemnly, 'that, indeed, is some palliation for his forbearance. But I must not have you so fond of the Scotch, my little Burney;—make your hero what you will but a Scotchman. Besides, you write Scotch—

you say "the ove,"—my dear, that's not English. Never use that phrase again."

And so on. All this must have been very pleasant to "little Burney"; and not less pleasant must have been the indirect praise extorted from the vain and irritable Cumberland, and the warm approval of Sheridan and Gibbon, Burke and Wyndham. It says much for the sobriety and self-control of the successful authoress that in all this whirlwind of applause she lost nothing of her modesty or womanly reserve. She was delighted, unquestionably delighted; but her delight sprang from her sympathy with the intense satisfaction of her father and friends, rather than from gratified vanity. And, as Macaulay says, while flattered by the great, the opulent, and the learned; while crowds followed her along the Steyne at Brighton, and the Pantiles at Tunbridge Wells, her heart still turned faithfully and lovingly towards the little family circle in St. Martin's Street. If she carefully noted down all the compliments, broad or refined, which were lavished upon her everywhere, it was for the sake of the pleasure they afforded to two or three persons who had loved her from infancy, had loved her in obscurity, and now rejoiced heartily in her sudden fame.

Let us turn now to the book with which Fanny Burney's reputation is indissolubly associated.

The heroine, Evelina, seventeen years of age when the story opens, is represented as beautiful exceedingly, as not less amiable than beautiful, but, as might be expected of a young lady in her "teens," deficient in prudence. She has received her education at the hands of the Rev. Mr. Villars, who had previously educated her mother; a girl of low birth who had married a man of rank, undergone all the pains and penalties of an unequal marriage, and died broken-hearted. Of her father, Sir John Belmont, she knows only the name; and she herself is called Miss Danville. Visiting London for the first time, in charge of Mrs. Mirvan, the mother of her friend Maria, she is recognised by her maternal grandmother, Madame Duval, who forcibly takes possession of her.

Through Madame Duval, she is introduced to a commonplace plebeian family, and as Theodore Hook afterwards loved to delineate, the Braughtons, silversmiths of Snow Hill, Holborn; and is thus involved in a succession of scenes which cleverly illustrate the follies of vulgar wealth and ignorant ostentation. Her sensibilities are outraged by her enforced contact

with their coarseness, and she sketches her relati in her letters to her friends with all the force a acumen of wounded feelings. "Mr. Braughto the opulent tradesman, "appears to be about fo years of age. He does not seem to want a comm understanding, though he is very contracted a prejudiced; he has spent his whole time in the Ci and I believe feels a great contempt for all who res elsewhere.

"His son seems weaker in his understanding, a more gay in his temper; but his gaiety is that o foolish, overgrown schoolboy, whose mirth consi in noise and disturbance. He disdains his father his close attention to business and love of mone though he seems himself to have no talent, spirit, generosity to make him superior to either. H chief delight appears to be tormenting and ridiculi his sisters; who, in return, most heartily desp him.

"Miss Braughton, the eldest daughter, is by means ugly; but looks proud, ill-tempered, and co ceited. She hates the City, though without knowi why; for it is easy to discover she has liv nowhere else. Miss Polly Braughton is rather pret

very ignorant, very giddy, and, I believe, very good-natured."

The two Miss Braughtons are drawn with a really powerful pencil; every touch tells. Their coarseness, their vulgarity of mind as of manner, and their want of feeling, so often a concomitant of want of breeding — are skilfully brought out by contrast with the innate refinement of Evelina. When they ascertain that she has danced with Lord Orville (the hero of the story), the elder one exclaims: "Lord, Polly, only think—Miss has danced with a Lord!" and Polly replies: "Well, that's a thing I should never have thought of! and pray, Miss, what did he say to you?"

Evelina is proud to accompany the Braughton family to the opera; an experience not readily to be forgotten. At the entrance to the pit Mr. Braughton offers a guinea, but, on learning that it will pay for two places only, withdraws it, and takes the young ladies to the gallery. Even there, he considers the entertainment no sufficient return for his expenditure. "I was never so fooled out of my money before," he exclaims, "since the hour of my birth. Either the doorkeeper's a knave, or this is the greatest imposition that was ever put upon the public."

"*Ma foi!*" cried Madame Duval, "I never sat in such a mean place in all my life. Why, it's as high—we shan't see nothing."

"I thought at the time," said Mr. Braughton, "that three shillings was an exorbitant price for a place in the gallery; but as we'd been asked so much at the other doors, why, I paid it without many words; but then, to be sure, thinks I, it can never be like any other gallery; we shall see some *crinkum-crankum* or other for our money; but I find it's as arrant a take-in as ever I met with."

"Why, it's as like the twelve-penny gallery at Drury Lane," cried the son, "as two peas are to one another. I never knew father so bit before."

"Lord," said Miss Braughton, "I thought it would have been quite a fine place, all over I don't know what, and done quite in taste."

Surely, the humours of the middle-class British Philistine, with his *idée fixe* of having his money's worth, were never more faithfully set before the reader. Brown, a young haberdasher, pays his court to Polly Braughton, much to the disgust of the elder sister who confides to Evelina her sentiments on the

subject, protesting that Polly cares more for the *éclat* of being married first than she does for her suitor. Afterwards comes Polly with *her* version of the story.

"She assured me, with much tittering, that her sister was in a great fright lest she should be married first. 'So I make her believe that I will,' continued she, 'for I love dearly to plague her a little; though, I declare, I don't intend to have Mr. Brown in reality; I am sure I don't like him half well enough—do you, Miss?'

"'It is not possible for me to judge of his merits," said I, 'as I am entirely a stranger to him.'

"'But what do you think of him, Miss?'

"'Why, really I—I don't know.'

"'But do you think him handsome?—some people reckon him to have a good, pretty person; but I'm sure, for my part, I think he's monstrous ugly—don't you, Miss?'

"'I am no judge; but I think his person is very—very well.'

"'*Very well!* Why, pray, Miss,' in a tone of vexation, 'what fault can you find with it?'

"'Oh! none at all.'

"'I'm sure you must be very ill-natured if you could. Now there's Biddy says she thinks nothing of him—but I know it's all out of spite. You must know, Miss, it makes her as mad as can be, that I should have a lover before her; but she's so proud that nobody will court her, and I often tell her she'll die an old maid. But the thing is, she has taken it into her head to have a liking for Mr. Smith as lodges on the first floor: but, Lord, he'll never have her, for he's quite a fine gentleman, and besides, Mr. Brown heard him say one day that he'll never marry as long as he lived, for he'd no opinion of matrimony.'

"'And did you tell your sister this?'

"'To be sure, I told her directly; but she did not mind me; however, if she will be a fool, she must.'"

All this conversation is very natural and lively; and Miss Polly's share is quite in keeping with her character. We are afterwards introduced to Mr. Smith, who has been asked to lend "the first floor" for the purposes of dinner, but consents only to lend it for the tea. "The truth is," he informs Evelina, "Miss Biddy and Polly take no care of anything; else, I'm sure, they should be always welcome to my room, for I'm never so happy as in obliging the ladies—that's my

character, ma'am; but really, the last time they had it, everything was made so greasy and so nasty that, upon my word, to a man who wishes to have things a little genteel, it was quite cruel."

In the course of his acquaintance with Evelina, he learns to admire her; but his mode of expressing his admiration is certainly unconventional:—"Really," he says, "there is no resolving upon matrimony all at once: what with the loss of one's liberty, and what with the ridicule of one's acquaintance,—I assure you, ma'am, you are the first lady who ever made me even demur upon this subject; for, after all, my dear ma'am, marriage is the devil,"—a speech which reads as if Fanny Burney had studied some of the naughty comedies of Congreve and Farquhar! He adds:—"To be sure, marriage is all in all with the ladies: but with us gentlemen it's quite another thing. Now, only put yourself in my place; suppose you had such a large acquaintance of gentlemen as I have, and that you had always been used to appear a little—a little smart among them—why, now, how should you like to let yourself down all at once into a married man?"

Evelina's lovers, Sir Clement Willoughby, the villain of the story, and Lord Orville, the perfect hero, are

delineated with unfailing vivacity. The former is not painted in exaggerated colours. He is audacious, treacherous, untrue; but he has great polish of manner, good spirits, and a certain amount of *bonhomie*. As for Lord Orville, handsome, courteous, gaily dressed and capable of a good deal of amatory enthusiasm, he is worthy of the heroine. She admires him on their first meeting; and a woman's admiration, like a woman's pity, soon ripens into love. He gains her confidence by protecting her against Sir Clement Willoughby. She cannot choose but dwell upon his graces and his virtues, even when she is rescued from the Braughtons, from the "vulgarness" of Madame Duval, and the coarseness of Captain Mirvan, and surrounded by all the attractions of fashionable society. Her whilom tutor, the Rev. Mr. Villars, bids her beware of an unrequited surrender of her heart; but what is she to do? "She saw Lord Orville at a ball, and he was the most amiable of men! She met him again at another, and he had every virtue under heaven!" Her heart is gone beyond recall. Happily, Lord Orville declares his affection, and saves her from the pangs of unrewarded love. At the same time she is acknowledged by her father, Sir John Belmont, and thus the round of right is completed.

But fresh and spontaneous as is the comedy of 'Evelina,' and lively and natural as are its characters, it has ceased to find many readers. It is often praised, but, we fancy, seldom read. People take its merits upon trust. They know that it is included in the library of standard fiction, and that is enough for them. It has no real, permanent popularity like 'Peregrine Pickle' or 'Joseph Andrews.' The reason we take to be this: its characters are amusing, but they are not flesh and blood. Each is the type of a particular failing or "humour," and not such a man or woman as we meet with in our walks abroad,—persons in whom *many* humours are combined, but relieved by at least a few good qualities. On the other hand, they do not arrest our attention by their picturesqueness or ideality, or as types of a class. Mr. Smith, therefore, and Madame Duval, and the Braughtons have long since passed away. We are all familiar with Commodore Trunnion, and Parson Adams, with Amelia and Lady Bellasis, with Peregrine Pickle and Tabitha Bramble. They possess a kind of immortality; are as living and real to-day as they were a hundred years ago. But Fanny Burney's characters are no longer with us. They have gone, with the labels that distinguished them, into the realm of shadows. They belonged to the age

and society which gave them birth; whereas those of Fielding and Smollett belong to all time, because they are instinct with that humanity which is always the same.

II.

LITERARY criticism has determined that a good novel, when adapted to the stage, will make a bad play; and experience has proved that a successful novelist is not necessarily a successful dramatist. It is true that the author of 'The Caxtons' wrote 'Richelieu' and 'Money'; but apart from the fact that he had had special opportunities of studying the requirements of the stage, we may remark that the plays are far less likely to live than the novel is. The genius of the novelist is wholly apart and distinct from that of the dramatist, while he works under different conditions, and with a different object. This fact however, was not acknowledged by the critics of Fanny Burney's day, and they came to the conclusion that one who could introduce so much comedy into her novel could not fail to write a good comic drama. They advised her, therefore, to write for the stage; and while Murphy, the author of 'The Way of the

World,' undertook to instruct her in stage-business, and Dr. Johnson, as author of that most melancholy of all tragedies, 'Irene,' to advise her upon her plot and situations, Sheridan effusively promised to accept a play from her hands without even reading it. Such pleasant flattery it was impossible to resist. Miss Burney set to work, and wrote and finished a comedy, which she called 'The Witlings.' She seems to have distrusted her dramatic capacity, however, and before placing the manuscript in Sheridan's hands, submitted it to the judgment of her father and her friend, "Daddy" Crisp. By both it was condemned; by the latter unsparingly. He declared that it was a total failure, that to attempt to retouch it would be useless, that it had plenty of wit but not a spark of interest, that it was ill-constructed, and moreover, that it resembled the *Femmes Savantes*,—which, by the way, she had never read,—and that she was unable to sustain a comparison with Molière. The authoress bore the disappointment with good grace. She wrote to Mr. Crisp in a spirit of frank simplicity:—

"Well! there are plays that are to be saved, and plays that are not to be saved! so good night, Mr. Dabbler! good night, Lady Smatter,—Mrs. Sapient,—Mrs. Voluble,—Mrs. Wheedle,—Censor,—Cecilia,—

Beaufort,—and you, you great oaf, Bobby,—good night! good night!

"And good morning, Miss Fanny Burney!—I hope now you have opened your eyes for some time, and will not close them in so drowsy a fit again—at least till the full of the moon.

"I won't tell you I have been absolutely *ravie* with delight at the fall of the curtain; but I intend to take the affair in the *tant mieux* manner, and to console myself for your censure by this greatest proof I have ever received of the sincerity, candour, and, let me add, esteem, of my dear daddy. And as I happen to love myself rather more than my play, this consolation is not a very trifling one.

"As to all you say of my reputation and so forth, I perceive the kindness of your endeavours to put me in humour with myself, and prevent my taking huff, which, if I did, I should deserve to receive, upon any future trial, hollow praise from you,—and the rest from the public.

"As to the MS., I am in no hurry for it. Besides, it ought not to come till I have prepared an ovation, and the honours of conquest for it.

"The only bad thing in this affair is, that I cannot take the comfort of my poor friend Dabbler, by calling

you a crabbed fellow, because you write with almost more kindness than ever; neither can I (though I try hard) persuade myself that you have not a grain of taste in your whole composition.

"This, however, seriously I do believe, that when my two daddies put their heads together to concoct for me that hissing, groaning, catcalling epistle they sent me, they felt as sorry for poor little Miss Bayes* as she could possibly do for herself."

Recognizing her incapacity for the field of dramatic composition, Miss Burney addressed herself once more to the work which she felt congenial to her powers, and began her second novel, 'Cecilia.' Her labours were interrupted by the affliction which befell her friend Mrs. Thrale in the sudden death of her husband; but the famous brewery having been sold, the clever and vivacious widow resumed her old mode of life, and Fanny was again a welcome guest at Streatham. The new novel was a great advance upon 'Evelina.' In truth, it was, as Macaulay describes it, a grand and various picture-gallery, which presented to the eye a long series of men and women, each marked by some strong peculiar feature.

* *Bayes* is the [illegible] author in the Duke of Buckingham's burlesque of The Rehearsal.

"There were avarice and prodigality, the pride of blood and the pride of money, morbid restlessness and morbid apathy, frivolous garrulity, supercilious silence, a Democritus to laugh at everything, and a Heraclitus to lament over everything." It was the work of twelve months, and everybody who read it in manuscript pronounced the twelve months well spent.

It moved excitable Mrs. Thrale to alternate tears and laughter. It drew from Daddy Crisp a vehement guarantee of its absolute success. The sum paid for the copyright is nowhere mentioned by Miss Burney, but was certainly not less than £2000, and even then, the publishers must have had a good bargain. For when it was published, in the summer of 1782, it was purchased by everybody, read by everybody, admired by everybody. Its reception anticipated that which was accorded to Sir Walter Scott's romances before the spell of the enchanter began to lose its power. Adverse criticism was dumb, and by general consent 'Cecilia' was enrolled among the great classical masterpieces of English fiction.

An accomplished and a lovely woman of twenty, Cecilia is heiress to an estate valued at £3000 a year,

on the sole condition that if she marries, her husband shall assume the name of Beverley. During her minority, she is left in charge of three guardians, Mr. Briggs, a man of avaricious disposition, Mr. Harrel, a notorious profligate, and Mr. Delvile, a well-born and haughty gentleman, who chafes continually at his enforced connection with a miser and a prodigal. He is constantly lamenting to Cecilia her uncle the Dean's ignorance of the world, which has led to his being disgraced by such inferior coadjutors. This is the burden of all his discourse; recurring again and again, like the leading motive in a piece of music.

Mr. Harrel shows himself sublimely indifferent to Mr. Delvile's sentiments; but not so Mr. Briggs, who returns scorn for scorn, and nicknames him "Don Puffabout." Cecilia resides with Mr. Harrel, who lives in Portman Square, and maintains a fashionable establishment. He introduces his ward to the members of his circle, to the supercilious Miss Luson, the garrulous Miss Larolles, to Mr. Meadows the exquisite, and Captain Aresby, a lady's man, who embellishes his speech with French words and phrases, and believes he has but to show himself to conquer.

Mr. Meadows is a capital sketch, and as original in conception as clever in execution. We quote a scene in which he appears:—

"'Do pray now,' cried Miss Larolles, 'observe Mr. Meadows; only just see where he has fixed himself —in the very best place in the room, and keeping the fire from everybody! I do assure you that's always his way, and it's monstrous provoking, for if one's ever so cold he lollops so that one's quite starved. But you must know there's another thing he does that is quite as bad, for if he gets a seat he never offers to move, if he sees one sinking with fatigue. And besides, if one is waiting for one's carriage two hours together, he makes it a rule never to stir a step to see for it. Only think, how monstrous!'

"'These are heavy complaints indeed,' said Cecilia, looking at him attentively; 'I should have expected from his appearance a very different account of his gallantry, for he seems dressed with more studied elegance than anybody here.'

"'Oh, yes!' cried Miss Larolles; 'he is the sweetest dresser in the world; he has the most delightful taste you can conceive, nobody has half so good a fancy. I assure you it's a great thing to be

spoke to by him; we are all of us quite angry when he won't take any notice of us.'

"'Is your anger,' said Cecilia, laughing, 'in honour of himself or of his coat?'

"'Why, Lord! don't you know all this time that he is an *ennuyé*?'

"'I know at least,' answered Cecilia, 'that he would soon make one of me.'

"'Oh! but one is never affronted with an *ennuyé*, if he is ever so provoking, because one always knows what it means.'

"'Is he agreeable?'

"'Why, to tell you the truth—but pray, now, don't mention it—I think him most excessive disagreeable. He yawns in one's face every time one looks at him. I assure you, sometimes I expect to see him fall fast asleep while I am talking to him—for he is so immensely absent he don't hear one half that one says; only conceive how horrid!'"

Mr. Meadows and Captain Aresby flutter round Cecilia at a distance, and with no serious intentions. It is otherwise with Mr. Arnold, who loves sincerely, but whose love wins only Cecilia's respect; with Mr. Mercklen, who endeavours to baffle all suitors to her hand until he is free to claim it on

the expected death of his elderly wife; and with Sir Robert Floyer, an ill-conditioned fellow, whose addresses, however, are encouraged by Mr. Harrel. There is also a Mr. Belfield, a man of humble birth but good education, whose escort on one occasion Cecilia prefers to that of the insolent baronet, and thereby becomes the unwilling cause of a duel, in which Mr. Belfield is wounded.

The interest of the plot increases when Mr. Harrel's debts threaten a catastrophe, and, in his desperate efforts to avert it, he obtains from Cecilia a sum of £7500, through a cleverly acted attempt at suicide. The loan is of no avail, for Harrel continues to gamble, and having contracted a debt of honour which he cannot pay, assaults his wife, and extracts another £1000 from Cecilia to save the poor woman from his ill-usage. She sees that to avoid utter ruin she must escape from her dishonest guardian, and she determines on removing to Mr. Delvile's. Harrel offers no objection, but induces Cecilia to accompany him to Vauxhall, where he proposes to take leave of her.

At Vauxhall he meets with two of his creditors; Hobson, vulgar and defiant, and Simpkins, vulgar and servile. In a wild burst of excitement he insists on

their supping with him. To this strange party comes Sir Robert Floyer, and regarding the duns with contempt, asks who they are? Harrel replies only with an invitation that he will make one of them. "One among you!" exclaims the baronet; "why, you don't fancy I'll sit down with a bricklayer?" "A bricklayer!" retorts Harrel; "ay, sure, and a hosier too; sit down, Simpkins, keep your place, man." Simpkins, the servile, assents with a bow; but Hobson exclaims:—"Sir, you may sit down with a worse man any day in the week! I have done nothing I'm ashamed of, and no man can say to me, 'Why did you so?' I don't tell you, sir, what I'm worth; no one has a right to ask. I only say, three times five is fifteen, that's all."

The whole of this scene is told with wonderful dramatic force, and there are few things more striking in early English fiction. The reader peruses it with breathless interest, the climax of which is reached when the miserable gambler, after hastily kissing his wife, rushes away from the lamp-lighted garden, and blows out his brains.

Cecilia Beverly is now free to transfer herself to Delvil Castle. Here she "meets her fate" in

Mortimer Delvile, who is as accomplished and handsome as a young lady could desire. But the course of true love no more runs smooth in Miss Burney's novels than elsewhere. Cecilia loves, it is true; and Delvile loves, it is true; but the latter makes no avowal, and between the two obstacle after obstacle is interposed; as, first, her supposed attachment to young Belfield; second, an imaginary engagement with Sir Robert Floyer; and last, and most serious, the impossibility that the heir of the Delviles should abandon his proud name for that of Beverley. On discovering this last unworthy difficulty Cecilia indignantly abandons the roof of the pompous Delviles, and returns to Suffolk. She is followed by Mortimer Delvile, who overhears her confessing her love for him to Fidele, a favourite dog, and breaking in upon her privacy, extorts her consent to a secret marriage. She is of age and her own mistress; but in want of a friend she reveals her intention to Mr. Monckton, of whose design upon her hand and fortune she is necessarily ignorant. With Mrs. Charlton, a companion, she meets Delvile at a certain Church, and the marriage-ceremony begins. Finding herself past all power of retracting, she soon ceases to wish for it, and turns her whole attention to "the awful service;"

to which, though she listens reverently, her deep love for Delvile enables her to listen "without terror." But when the priest arrives at the injunction, "if any man can show just cause . . . let him now speak, or else hereafter for ever hold his peace;" what are her emotions to hear a shrill female voice in the distance exclaim, "I do!" The ceremony is immediately stopped. The astonished priest shuts up his book to regard the intended bride and bridegroom. Delvile turns with amazement to see whence came the unwelcome sound; and Cecilia, aghast, and struck with horror, faintly shrieks, and catches hold of Mrs. Charlton. *Tableau!*

As the unwelcome interlocutor does not come forward, we know no reason why the ceremony should not have proceeded; but Cecilia, apparently, has received a fatal wound to her pride. She returns, unmarried, to Suffolk. Immediately arrives Mrs. Delvile, who has contrived to find out everything, and by alternate appeals to Cecilia's pride and [illegible] pressure a formal renunciation of the unfortunate Mortimer. He is called in to hear his doom; [illegible] expecting it passionately, provokes his mother to [illegible] an excess of anger that she breaks a blood-vessel. The [illegible] that then seizes him temporarily

overcomes his love for Cecilia; the two part with a solemn vow to meet no more unless the mother's consent can be obtained.

It will be seen that here already is plot enough and incident enough, to furnish forth a couple of modern novels. But Miss Burney continues to "pile up" the interest. Cecilia, having attained her majority, repairs to London to take the necessary steps to relieve her guardians of their responsibility. Her interview with Mr. Delvile is not agreeable. His prejudice against her assumes the proportions almost of a monomania. He accuses her of a passion for young Belfield, and of having spent the greater part of her £10,000 upon him. She meets the accusation with a firm denial. He then resorts to Mrs. Belfield. The good lady wishes to know the name of her visitor. "I am seldom obliged to announce myself," is the pompous reply; "nor is there any present necessity I should make it known. It is sufficient for me to assure you that you are speaking to no very common person, and probably to one you will have little chance to meet with again." After some further preliminaries, the following dialogue ensues, to which Cecilia, who is in the adjoining room with Miss Belfield, has the pleasure of listening:—

"Has Mr. Belfield made any proposals to a young lady of fortune?"

"'Lack-a-day, no, sir," answered Mrs. Belfield, to the infinite relief of Cecilia, who instantly concluded this question referred to herself.

"I beg your pardon, then; good morning to you, ma'am," said Mr. Delvile, in a tone that spoke his disappointment; but added, "and there is no such young person, you say, who favours his pretensions?"

"Dear sir," cried she, "why, there's nobody he'll so much as put the question to; there's a young lady at this very time, a great fortune, that has as much mind to him, I tell him, as any man need desire to see; but there's no making him think it, though he has been brought up at the university, and knows more about all the things, or as much as anybody in the king's dominions."

"Oh! then," cried Mr. Delvile, in a voice of far more complacency, "it is not on the side of the young woman that the difficulty seems to rest?"

"Lord! no, sir, he might have had her again and again, only for asking. She found him out, sir, when none of his own natural friends could tell where in the world he was gone. She was the first, sir,

to come and tell me news of him, though I was his own mother. Love, sir, is prodigious for quickness; it can see, I sometimes think, through bricks and mortar!"

After a few more sentences, Mrs. Belfield mentions the report that Cecilia was to have "young Mr. Delvile, one of her guardian's sons."

"I am sorry report was so impertinent," cried* Mr. Delville, with much displeasure; "young Mr. Delvile is not to be disposed of with so little ceremony—he knows better what is due to his family."

"Lord! sir," answered Mrs. Belfield, "what should his family do better? I never heard they were any so rich, and I dare say the old gentleman, being her guardian, took care to put his son enough in her way; however, it came about that they did not make a match of it, for, as to old Mr. Delvile, all the world says—"

"All the world takes a very great liberty," angrily interrupted Mr. Delvile, "in saying anything about him; and you will excuse my informing you that a person of his rank and consideration is not lightly

* This is a favourite word of Miss Burney's. We grow weary of its "damnable iteration."

to be mentioned upon every little occasion that occurs."

"Lord! sir," cried Mrs. Belfield, somewhat surprised at this unexpected prohibition, "I don't care for my part, if I never mention the old gentleman's name again! I never heard any good of him in my life, for they say he's as proud as Lucifer, and nobody knows what it's of; for they say—"

"*They* say," cried he, firing with rage, "and who are *they*? Be so good as to inform me that!"

But why need we say more? The experienced reader will feel certain that Miss Burney contrives to find a way of escape for her heroine out of the perplexities in which she has so ingeniously involved her. Mrs. Delville's affection for her son overcomes her pride, and she proposes that Cecilia shall marry him, and, as she cannot assume her name, forfeit the decanal inheritance. With rare self-abnegation Cecilia complies, and the marriage is privately celebrated, without Mrs. Delville's knowledge. After the ceremony, Mrs. Delville and her son prepare to start for the Continent for the restoration of her health; while Cecilia once more returns to Suffolk. It is not long before she learns that she has been slandered to Mr.

Delvile by Mr. Monckton, and that the interruption of her secret marriage was effected by one of his accomplices. Close upon this amazing discovery comes the information that her husband having wounded Mr. Monckton in a duel, has been compelled to fly the country. Her marriage becomes known; the Beverley estate is claimed by the next heir; she hurries to London, and is rejoined by her husband, who is straightway filled with a wild jealousy of Belfield, and challenges him to mortal combat. No wonder that such a succession of calamities proves too much for Cecilia's reason. At night she roams the streets of London, mad, calling in frenzied tones upon her husband. A benevolent pawnbroker gives her shelter. She is restored to her friends; she recovers her health; old Mr. Delvile relents; and her husband prostrates himself at her feet. All's well that ends well; but still this later portion of the tale is forced, involved, and inconsistent. There are not sufficient grounds for Monckton's interference; and the heroine's madness is as unnecessary and as unreal as that of Tilburina.

In style, as in the development of the plot and the presentation of character, "Cecilia" is a decided improvement upon 'Evelina.' It is more correctly

written, and the language, often eloquent, is always energetic. Ill-natured persons whispered that it exhibited traces of Dr. Johnson's fine Roman hand. It is possible that he revised it, but he certainly did no more. The Johnsonianisms are due to Miss Burney's imitation of the pompous periods of her illustrious friend. Macaulay quotes the following passage as corrected by his hand, but we venture to say that it is Fanny's own, only pitched in the sonorous Johnsonian key:—

"It is rather an imaginary than an actual evil, and though a deep wound to pride, no offence to morality. Thus have I laid open to you my whole heart, confessed my perplexities, acknowledged my vainglory, and exposed with equal sincerity the sources of my doubts, and the motives of my decision. But now, indeed, how to proceed I know not. The difficulties which are yet to encounter I fear to enumerate, and the petition I have to urge, I have scarce courage to mention. My family, mistaking ambition for honour, and rank for dignity, have long planned a splendid connection for me, to which, though my invariable repugnance has stopped any advances, their wishes and their views irrevocably adhere. I am but too certain they will now listen to no other. I

dread, therefore, to make a trial where I despair of success."

We catch here an echo of 'The Rambler,' but nothing more. Even this antithetical sententiousness vanishes in the ordinary descriptive passages, which are fluent and lively, while the conversations are managed with admirable ease and naturalness.

III.

Miss Burney's success as a novelist introduced her into the best circles of London Society, and the characters she met with, and the scenes in which she figured, are described in her Diary with a spirit and a fidelity that remind us of the best passages in her works of fiction. We should not do justice to her literary merits if we did not place some specimens before the reader. What can be more lifelike or more amusing than the following bright and spirited sketch of "a rout" at "the house of Mr. Paradise?"

Miss Burney *loquitur.*

There was a crowd of company; Charlotte and I went together; my father came afterwards. Mrs Paradise received us very graciously, and led me immediately up to Miss Thrale, who was sitting by the Pac. [Pacchierotti, a famous singer]. The Miss

Kirwans, you may be sure, were not far off, and so I did pretty well. There was nobody else I knew but Dr. Solander [the botanist who accompanied Cook in his voyage round the world], Mr. Coxe the traveller, Sir Sampson and Lady Gideon (Streatham acquaintances), Mr. Sastres, and Count Zenobia, a noble Venetian, whom I have often met lately at Mrs. Thrale's.

We were very late, for we had waited cruelly for the coach, and Pac. had sung a song out of 'Artaxerxes' [Dr. Arne's opera], composed for a tenor, which we lost to my infinite regret. Afterwards he sang 'Dolce Sperne,' set by Bertoni, less elegantly than by Sacchini, but more expressively for the words. He sang it delightfully. . . . After this he went into another room, to try if it would be cooler; and Mrs. Paradise, leaning over the Kirwans and Charlotte, who hardly got a seat all night for the crowd, said she begged to speak to me. I squeezed my great person out, and she then said,—

"Miss Burney, Lady Say and Sele desires the honour of being introduced to you."

Her ladyship stood by my side. She seems pretty near fifty—[illegible] least turned forty; her head was full of feathers, f[illegible]rs, jewels, and gew-gaws, and as high as Lady Archer's; her dress was trimmed with beads,

silver, Persian sashes, and all sorts of fine fancies; her face is *thin and fiery*, and her whole manner spoke a lady all alive.

"Miss Burney," cried she, with great quickness, and a look all curiosity, "I am very happy to see you: I have longed to see you a great while; I have read your performance, and I am quite delighted with it. I think it's the most elegant novel I ever read in my life. Such a style! I am quite surprised at it. I can't think where you got so much invention!"

You may believe this was a reception not to make me very loquacious. I did not know which way to turn my head.

"I must introduce you," continued her ladyship, "to my sister; she'll be quite delighted to see you. She has written a novel herself; so you are sister authoresses. A most elegant thing it is, I assure you; almost as pretty as yours, only not quite so elegant. She has written two novels, only one is not so pretty as the other. But I shall insist upon your seeing them. One is in letters, like yours, only yours is prettiest. It's called the 'Mausoleum of Julia'!"

What unfeeling things, thought I, are my sisters! I'm sure I never heard them go about thus praising me!

Mrs. Paradise then came forward, and taking my hand, led me up to her ladyship's sister, Lady Hawke, saying aloud, and with a courteous smirk, "Miss Burney, ma'am, authoress of 'Evelina'; so you are sister-authoresses!"

"Yes," cried my friend, Lady Say and Sele, who followed me close, "it's the authoress of 'Evelina'; so you are sister-authoresses!"

Lady Hawke arose and curtsied. She is much younger than her sister, and rather pretty; extremely languishing, delicate, and pathetic; apparently accustomed to be reckoned the genius of her family, and well contented to be looked upon as a creature dropped from the clouds.

I was then seated between their ladyships, and Lady Say and Sele drawing as near to me as possible, said,—

"Well, and so you wrote this pretty book!—and pray did your papa know of it?"

"No, ma'am; not till some months after the publication."

"So I've heard; it's surprising! I can't think how you invented it!—there's a vast deal of invention in it! And you've got so much humour, too! Now, my sister has no humour—hers is all sentiment. You

can't think how I was entertained with that old grandmother and her son!"

I suppose she meant Tom Braughton for the son.

"How much pleasure you must have had in writing it; had not you?"

"Y-e-s, ma'am."

"So has my sister; she's never without a pen in her hand; she can't help writing for her life. When Lord Hawke is travelling about with her, she keeps writing all the way."

"Yes," said Lady Hawke; "I really can't help writing. One has great pleasure in writing the things; has not one, Miss Burney?"

"Y-e-s, ma'am."

"But your novel," cried Lady Say and Sele, "is in such a style! so elegant! I am vastly glad you made it end happily. I hate a novel that don't end happy."

"Yes," said Lady Hawke, with a languid smile, "I was vastly glad when she married Lord Orville. I was [illegible] it would not have been."

"My [illegible]," said Lady Say and Sele, "to [illegible] just for her own friends and acquaintances!"

"Yes," said lady Hawke, "I have never printed yet."*

"I saw Lady Hawke's name," quoth I to my first friend, "ascribed to the play of 'Variety.'"

"Did you indeed?" cried Lady Say, in an ecstasy. "Sister! do you know Miss Burney saw your name in the newspapers, about the play!"

"Did she?" said Lady Hawke, smiling complacently. "But I really did not write it; I never wrote a play in my life."

"Well," cried Lady Say, "but do repeat that sweet part I am so fond of—you know what I mean; Miss Burney *must* hear it,—out of your novel, you know!"

Lady H. "No, I can't; I have forgot it."

Lady S. "Oh, no! I am sure you have not; I insist upon it."

Lady H. "But I know you can repeat it yourself; you have so fine a memory; I am sure you can repeat it."

Lady S. "Oh, but I should not do it justice! that's all,—I should not do it justice!"

Lady Hawke then bent forward, and repeated—

* We do not think the 'Mausoleum of Julia' was printed, after all. We have failed to find any trace of this remarkable work.

"'If, when he made the declaration of his l
the sensibility that beamed in his eyes was felt
his heart, what pleasing sensations and soft alar
might not that tender avowal awaken!'

"And from what, ma'am," cried I, astonisl
and imagining I had mistaken them, "is this taken

"From my sister's novel!" answered the deligl
Lady Say and Sele, expecting my raptures to
equal to her own; "it's in the 'Mausoleum,'—
not you know that? Well, I can't think how
can write these sweet novels! And it's all just
that part. Lord Hawke himself says it's all poe
For my part, I'm sure I never could write so
suppose, Miss Burney, you are producing anothe
a'n't you?"

"No, ma'am."

"Oh! I dare say you are. I dare say you
writing one at this very minute!"

Mrs. Paradise now came up to me again, follo
by a square man, middle-aged, and hum-drum, v
I found, was Lord Say and Sele . . .

"Miss Burney," said Mrs. P., presenting me
him, "authoress of 'Evelina.'"

"Yes," cried Lady Say and Sele, starting up, "
the authoress of 'Evelina'!"

"Of what?" cried he.

"Of 'Evelina.' You'd never think it,—she looks so young, to have so much invention, and such an elegant style! Well, I could write a play, I think, but I'm sure I could never write a novel."

"Oh! yes you could, if you would try," said Lady Hawke.

"Oh! no, I could not," answered she; "I could not get a style—that's the thing—I could not tell how to get a style! and a novel's nothing without a style, you know!"

"Why, no," said Lady Hawke; "that's true. But then you write such charming letters, you know!"

"Letters!" repeated Lady S. & S., simpering; "do you think so? Do you know I wrote a long letter to Mrs. Ray just before I came here, this very afternoon,—quite a long letter! I did, I assure you!"

Then Mrs. Paradise came forward with another gentleman, younger, slimmer, and smarter, and saying to me, "Sir Gregory Page Turner," said to him, "Miss Burney, authoress of 'Evelina.'"

At which Lady Say and Sele, in fresh transport, again arose, and rapturously again repeated—"Yes, she's authoress of 'Evelina!' Have you read it?"

"No; is it to be had?"

"Oh dear, yes! it's been printed these two years! You'd never think it! But it's the most elegant novel I ever read in my life. Writ in such a style!"

"Certainly," said he, very civilly; "I have every inducement to get it. Pray where is it to be had? everywhere, I suppose?"

"Oh, nowhere, I hope!" cried I, wishing at that moment it had never been in human ken.

My *square* friend, Lord Say and Sele, then putting his head forward, said, very solemnly, "I'll purchase it!"

His lady then mentioned to me a hundred novels that I had never heard of, asking my opinion of them, and whether I knew the authors; Lady Hawke only occasionally and languidly joining in the discourse; and then Lady S. & S. suddenly arising, begged me not to move, for she should be back again in a minute, and flew to the next room.

I took, however, the first opportunity of Lady Hawke's casting down her eyes, and reclining her delicate head, to make away from this terrible set; and, just as I was got by the pianoforte, where I hoped Paccherotti would soon present himself, Mrs. Paradise again came to me, and said,—

"Miss Burney, Lady Say and Sele wishes vastly to cultivate your acquaintance, and begs to know if she may have the honour of your company to an assembly at her house next Friday?—and I will do myself the pleasure to call for you, if you will give me leave."

"Her ladyship does me much honour, but I am unfortunately engaged," was my answer, with as much promptness as I could command.

This is certainly an effective conversation-piece, and exhibits in a very striking light Miss Burney's almost unequalled power of seizing the "humours" of certain classes of society. The simpering Lady Hawke and the bustling loquacious wondering Lady Say and Sele are drawn "to the life," and are quite as vividly delineated as any of the characters in her fictions.

We transcribe another scene. Among the friends whom the popularity of the young authoress drew around her was Mrs. Delany, that admirable old lady,* the friend and correspondent of Swift, who has left

* It was said of her that "she had every virtue that could adorn the human heart, with a mind so pure and so uncontaminated by the world, that it was matter of astonishment how she could have lived in its more splendid scenes without being tainted with one single atom of its folly or indiscretion."

so pleasant a sketch of herself in her 'Autobiography.' At this time she was in her 83rd year.

At Mrs. Delany's.

I spent one hour with Mrs. Thrale, and then called for Mrs. Chapone [born 1727, died 1801, the didactic authoress of the once popular 'Letters on the Improvement of the Mind'], and we proceeded together to St. James's Place.

Mrs. Delany was alone in her drawing-room, which is entirely hung round with pictures of her own painting, and ornaments of her own designing.* She came to the door to receive us. She is still tall, though some of her height may be lost; not much, however, for she is remarkably upright. She has no remains of beauty in feature, but in countenance I never but once saw more, and that was in my sweet maternal grandmother. Benevolence, softness, piety, and gentleness are all resident in her face; and the resemblance with which she struck me to my dear grandmother, in her first appearance, grew so much stronger from all that came from her mind, which seems to contain nothing but purity and native humility, that

* [illegible] Mrs. Delany had considerable skill and good [illegible]

I almost longed to embrace her; and I am sure if I had, the recollection of that saint-like woman would have been so strong that I should never have refrained from crying over her.

Mrs. Chapone presented me to her, and, taking my hand, she said,—

"You must pardon me if I give you an old-fashioned reception, for I know nothing new."

And she saluted me.

"Can you forgive, Miss Burney," she continued, "this great liberty I have taken with you, of asking for your company to dinner? I wished so impatiently to see one from whom I have received such extraordinary pleasure, that, as I could not be alone this morning, I could not bear to put it off to another day; and, if you had been so good to come in the evening, I might, perhaps, have had company; and I been so ill that I cannot, as I wish to do, attend to more than one at a time; for age makes me stupid even more than I am by nature; and how grieved and mortified I must have been to know I had Miss Burney in the room, and not to hear her!" . . .

Mrs. Chapone then made me look at the paintings, which I greatly admired; particularly a copy of Sacchari[illegible] [Lady Dorothy Sidney, celebrated as

'Saccharissa' by the poet Waller], from Vandyke. There was also a portrait of Madame de Sévigné, which struck me very much; and, while I was noticing the gaiety of its countenance, Mrs. Delany, with an arch look, said,—

"Yes, it is very *enjouée*, as *Captain Aresby* [a character in 'Cecilia'] would say."

And afterwards of some other, but I have forgot what she said,—

"I don't know how it is, Mrs. Chapone, but I can never look at that picture without thinking of poor *Belfield*. You must forgive us, Miss Burney; it is not right to talk of these people; but we don't know how to speak at all now without, they are so always in our minds!"

Soon after we went to dinner, which was plain, neat, well-cooked, and elegantly served. When it was over, I began to speak; and now, my Chesington auditors, look to yourselves!

"Will you give me leave, ma'am, to ask if you remember anybody of the name of Crisp?"

"Crisp?" cried she; "what! Mrs. Ann Crisp?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"O, surely! extremely well! a charming, an excellent woman she was; we were very good friends

once; I visited her at Burford, and her sister Mrs. Gast."

Then came my turn, and I talked of the brother ["Daddy" Crisp, her old and faithful friend and adviser]; but I won't write what I said. . . .

Mrs. Chapone then asked me a hundred questions about Mr. Crisp, and said,—

"Pray, is he a *Doctor Lyster?*"

"I don't know Dr. Lyster, ma'am," cried I, very simply, for the book was so wholly out of my head at the time, that I really thought she meant some living character. They both laughed very much, and assured me they should soon teach me to remember names better, if I lived with them.

This Chesingtonian talk lasted till we went upstairs, and then she showed me the new art which she has invented. It is staining paper of all possible colours, and then cutting it out, so finely and delicately, that when it is pasted on paper or vellum, it has all the appearance of being pencilled, except that, by being raised, it has still a richer and more natural look. The effect is extremely beautiful. She invented it at seventy-five! She told me she did four flowers the first year; sixteen the second; and the third 160; and after that many more. They are all from nature, and

consist of the most curious flowers, plants, and weeds, that are to be found. She has been supplied with patterns from all the great gardens, and all the great florists in the kingdom. Her plan was to finish 1000; but, alas! her eyes now fail her, though she has only twenty undone of her task.

She has marked the places whence they all came, on the back, and where she did them, and the year; and she has put her cypher, M. D., at the corner of each, in different coloured letters for every different year—such as red, blue, green, etc.

"But," said she, "the last year, as I found my eyes grew very dim, and threatened to fail before my work was completed, I put my initials in white, for I seemed to myself already working in my winding sheet."

I could almost have cried at the mingled resignation and spirits with which she made this melancholy speech. . . .

At about seven o'clock, the Duchess Dowager of Portland came. She is not near so old as Mrs. Delany, nor, to me, is her face by any means so pleasing; but yet there is sweetness, and dignity, and intelligence in it. Mrs. Delany received her with the same respectful ceremony as if it were her first visit, though

she regularly goes to her every evening. But what she at first took as an honour and condescension, she has so much true humility of mind, that no use can make her see in any other light. She immediately presented me to her. Her Grace courtesied and smiled with the most flattering air of pleasure, and said she was particularly happy in meeting with me.

We then took our places, and Mrs. Delany said,—

"Miss Burney, ma'am, is acquainted with Mr. Crisp, whom your Grace know so well; and she tells me he and his sister have been so good as to remember me, and to mention me to her."

The Duchess instantly asked me a thousand questions about him;—where he lived, how he had his health, and whether his fondness for the polite arts still continued. She said he was one of the most ingenious and agreeable men she had ever known, and regretted his having sequestered himself so much from the society of his former friends.

This conversation lasted a long while. . . . In the course of it I found her very charming, high-bred, courteous, sensible, and spirited; not merely free from pride, but free from affability—its most mortifying deputy.

After this she asked me if I had seen Mrs. Siddons, and what I thought of her. I answered that I admired her very much.

"If Miss Burney approves her," said the Duchess, "no approbation, I am sure, can do her so much credit; for no one can so perfectly judge of character or of human nature."

"Ah! ma'am," said Mrs. Delany archly, "and does your Grace remember protesting you would never read 'Cecilia'?"

"Yes," said she, laughing; "I declared that five volumes could never be attacked; but since I began I have read it three times."

"O terrible!" cried I, "to make them out fifteen!"

"The reason," continued she, "I held out so long against reading them, was remembering the cry there was in favour of 'Clarissa' and 'Sir Charles Grandison' when they came out; and those I never could read. I was tempted into trying both of them; but I was disgusted with their tediousness, and could not read eleven letters, with all the effort I could make, so much about my sisters and my brothers, and all my uncles and my aunts!"

"But if your Grace had gone on with 'Clarissa,'"

said Mrs. Chapone, "the latter part must certainly have affected you, and charmed you."

"Oh! I hate anything so dismal! Everybody that did read it had melancholy faces for a week. 'Cecilia' is as pathetic as I can bear, and more sometimes; yet, in the midst of the sorrow, there is a spirit in the writing, a fire in the whole composition, that keeps off that heavy depression given by Richardson. Cry, to be sure, we did. O Mrs. Delany, shall you ever forget how we cried? But then we had so much laughter to make us amends, we were never left to sink under our concern."

I am really ashamed to write on.

"For my part," said Mrs. Chapone, "when I first read it, I did not cry at all; I was in an agitation that half killed me, that shook all my nerves, and made me unable to sleep at nights, from the suspense I was in; but I could not cry, for excess of eagerness."

"I only wish," said the Duchess, "Miss Burney could have been in some corner, amusing herself with listening to us, when Lord Weymouth, and the Bishop of Exeter, and Mr. Lightfoot, and Mrs. Delany, and I, were all discussing the point of the name. So earnest we were, she must have been diverted with us. Nothing, the nearest our own

hearts and interests, could have been debated more warmly. The Bishop was quite as eager as any of us; but what cooled us a little, at last, was Mr. Lightfoot's thinking we were seriously going to quarrel; and while Mrs. Delany and I were disputing about Mrs. Delvile, he very gravely said, 'Why, ladies, this is only a matter of imagination; it is not a fact, don't be so earnest.'"

"Ah! ma'am," said Mrs. Delany, "how hard your Grace was upon Mrs. Delvile; so elegant, so sensible, so judicious, so charming a woman."

[This plain, straightforward, matter-of-fact style of criticism is sadly out of vogue in our æsthetic days; but so, indeed, is so plain, straightforward, and matter-of-fact a novel as Miss Burney's 'Cecilia'! We deal now in 'the objective' and 'the subjective,' the 'sensuous' and 'ideal,' and goodness knows what. We wonder what the Dowager Duchess of Portland and Mrs. Chapone, Mrs. Delany and the Bishop of Exeter, would have said to 'Daniel Deronda?' Or what kind of reception would they have given to 'Jane Eyre?']

"I shall never forget," said Mrs. Delany, "your Grace's earnestness when we came to that part where Mrs. Delvile bursts a blood-vessel. Down dropped the

book, and just with the same energy as if your Grace had heard some real and important news, you called out, 'I'm glad of it with all my heart!'"

"What disputes, too," said Mrs. Chapone, "there are about Briggs. I was in a room some time ago when somebody said there could be no such character; and a poor little mean city man, who was there, started up and said, "But there is though, for I'se one myself!'"

"The Harrels!—O, then the Harrels!" cried Mrs. Delany.

"If you speak of the Harrels, and of the morality of the book," cried the Duchess, with a solemn sort of voice, "we shall, indeed, never give Miss Burney her due; so striking, so pure, so genuine, so instructive."

"Yes," cried Mrs. Chapone, "let us complain how we will of the torture she has given our nerves, we must all join in saying she has bettered us by every line."

"No book," said Mrs. Delany, "ever was so useful as this, because none other that is so good was ever so much read."

I think (adds Miss Burney), I need now write no more. I could, indeed, hear no more; for this last so

serious praise, from characters so respectable, so moral, and so aged, quite affected me; and though I had wished a thousand times during the discourse to run out of the room, when they gave me finally this solemn sanction to the meaning and intention of my writing, I found it not without difficulty that I could keep the tears out of my eyes; and when I told what had passed to our sweet father, his quite ran over.

Her acquaintance with Mrs. Delany effected a remarkable, and what eventually proved to be a deplorable, change in Miss Burney's course of life. Mrs. Delany introduced her to Queen Charlotte, who frequently visited the good old lady in a house which had been provided for her at Windsor. Our author's description of her first interview with royalty is capitally told. It was after dinner, and Mrs. Delany was enjoying the privilege of age, a nap. Her little grandchild, a girl of seven, and Miss Burney were engaged meanwhile in the drawing-room, in some Christmas games. Suddenly the door opened, and "a large man," in deep mourning, entered, shutting the door after him, without speaking. Miss Burney looked round, and by the star glittering on his breast, knew him to be the King! A general *sauve qui peut*

followed; but Mrs. Delany, who had come in, reassured Miss Burney, and introduced her. The interrogative talent of George III. was immediately exercised. Having told the delighted authoress with how much interest and pleasure he had read her 'Evelina,' he said,—

"But what?—what?—how was it?"

"Sir—" cried Miss Burney, not well understanding him.

"How came you — how happened it — what?—what?"

"I—I only wrote, sir, for my own amusement,—only in some odd, idle hours."

"But your publishing—your printing—how was that?"

"That was only, sir,—only because—"

Here Miss Burney came to a full stop, being unwilling to enter upon a long story. But the *what!* was so repeated with so earnest a look that, forced to say something, she stammered out,—

"I thought—sir—it would look very well in print!"

Afterwards she flattered herself that this was the silliest speech she had ever made; but it satisfied the good-natured monarch, who, laughing heartily, ex-

claimed,—"Very fair indeed! that's being very f
and honest!"

Into this cross-fire of question and answer so
broke the Queen. The Burney was duly presente
and George III. repeated to his consort all the
formation he had succeeded in extracting. A lo
conversation followed, in which the royal couple bo
their part with great good nature, and Miss Burn
with becoming diffidence, Mrs. Delany coming to t
rescue occasionally when signs of a deadlock we
discernible.

In a few days the visit was repeated, and, as mig
be expected, Miss Burney was more at ease. S
was not doomed, moreover, to so formidable an e
amination. The King, on this occasion, gave rath
than sought for information. He criticised a pamphl
by Richard Cumberland; he condemned the e
tendency of Voltaire's works; of Rousseau he spo
with more favour, though by no means with appr
bation; diverging to actors and actresses, he bestow
upon Mrs. Siddons the warmest praise; then he co
plained, as people have always complained, of t
great want of good modern comedies; and finall
talked rather to no purpose respecting Shakespeare.

"Was there ever," cried the royal critic, "sa

as great part of Shakespeare? only one must
y so! But what think you?—what?—Is there
d stuff! What?—what?"
es, indeed, I think so, sir, though mixed with
xcellences, that—"
h!" cried he, laughing good-humouredly, "I
it is not to be said! but it's true. Only it's
speare, and nobody dare abuse him."

another occasion it was the Queen who played
rt of critic. Boswell was going to publish a
Dr. Johnson. Well, he was so extraordinary a
hat perhaps he would devise something extra-
ry. Did Miss Burney like the 'Sorrows of
r'? Miss Burney had read only part of it, and
t approve of what she had read. No more did
een; she considered it written by a bad man
venge. Klopstock's 'Messiah,' she said, con-
four most perfect lines on religion. Then she
sed Milton, and Wickliffe, and Cranmer; and
hed against the Roman Catholic superstitions.
ot unnatural result of these interviews, and of
is royal condescension, was, that the better
ent both of Frances and her father gave way to
e of delight half-unconscious self-exaltation;

and on the Queen's offering the post of keeper of the royal robes, vacated by the retirement of a German lady, to the successful novelist, she unwisely accepted it. She had better have remained faithful to literature. The public was a more liberal patron than Queen Charlotte, and was willing to give her not only reputation but a handsome competency, while allowing her to retain her freedom of action and to enjoy the happiness of her home-circle. It is astonishing that Miss Burney, with her prudent and well-balanced mind, should not have appreciated these considerations. For what had the Queen to offer? Board, lodging, the attendance of a man-servant, and £200 a year! In return for this, Frances had to consent to an almost complete separation from her family, to what was little else than a painfully close imprisonment, and the dedication of all her faculties to the observance of a fatiguing and ridiculous etiquette! She had to give up the exercise of those remarkable talents by which she had amused and instructed thousands. Instead of visiting on equal terms with the distinguished men and women of the time, she had to accept the forced companionship of the chief keeper of the robes, "an old hag from Germany, of mean understanding, of indecent manners, and of temper which, naturally

savage, had been exasperated by disease." For such a mess of pottage did Frances Burney surrender her birthright! Never was a more unequal or more disastrous bargain made.

IV.

It is not to be doubted that both the King and Queen thought they were doing "the Burney" a kindness by thus admitting her within the charmed circle of the royal household. It can as little be doubted that Dr. Burney felt himself honoured in his daughter, and regarded her appointment as a social elevation of conspicuous brilliancy. Fanny, though somewhat dazzled by the condescension of which she had been the object, seems at the last to have hesitated, and after she had consented would fain have drawn back. But, in Macaulay's picturesque phrase, Dr. Burney seems to have been of opinion that going to court was like going to heaven; that to see princes and princesses was a kind of beautiful vision; that the exquisite felicity enjoyed by royal personages was not confined to themselves, but was communicated by some mysterious efflux or reflection

to all who were suffered to stand at their toilettes, or to bear their trains.

So he combated his daughter's objections, overruled her scruples, and with flashing eye, step elate, and head uplifted, escorted her to the door of the prison-house. It opened, and it shut. For Fanny there was no escape; nothing but a tender regret for the past, and an uneasy anticipation of the future.

Then her slavery began. It endured for five years, and the slave has described its various phases in her Diary with a minute faithfulness which shows how deeply she suffered. For an active mind and a quick fancy no life could possibly have been more dreary. It was the climax of miserable monotony; it was the acme of gloomy uniformity. Day after day the same dull round of trivial actions—the same small talk—the same almost incredible exaggeration of little things. Day after day the authoress of 'Cecilia,' whether well or ill, was called upon to rise and dress early, that, at half past seven, she might answer the royal bell. For half an hour it was her proud privilege to attend in the Queen's dressing-room, to lace the royal stays, and put on the royal hoop, gown, and neckhandkerchief; neces-

sary duties, we grant, but duties which the most commonplace mind could have performed as well as, or even better than, the authoress of 'Cecilia.' The morning was occupied in finding a place for everything, and putting everything — especially the royal finery—in its place. Afterwards, the Queen had to be powdered and dressed; and twice a day the royal hair had to be curled and *criped* after the monstrous fashion of the times,—the process consuming some sixty minutes. About three o'clock in the afternoon Frances was dismissed, and she could then count on a couple of hours for herself; hours which she devoted to filling in, in her Diary, that wonderful picture which exposes so vividly the rigorous monotony, and painful dulness of a court life.

At five Miss Burney's worst penance began; for she was then required to attend her colleague, the stern, querulous, coarse, and selfish German tyrant, Madame Schellenberg. She made full use of her opportunities to vex and afflict poor Miss Burney. But Miss Burney has had her revenge. In the pages of the Diary she is exposed to scorn and indignation as long as English literature shall exist. The ill-assorted couple were forced to endure each other's society, on most occasions, from five till eleven.

frequently without any other company, except between eight and nine when the equerries came to tea. At times Miss Burney sought to escape to her own apartment, but was always pursued by a volley of insults and reproaches, and complaints of shameful neglect. Her absence was as little agreeable as her presence. Madame Schellenberg hated literature; but no doubt with her abhorrence of the popular novelist was mixed a good deal of fear of her portrait-taking capabilities. She knew she was the inferior of the author of 'Cecilia'; and she sought to compensate herself by heaping on her every insult she could devise. The only possible means of securing a tolerably quiet evening was to engage the tyrant at a game of cards; but as Miss Burney detested cards, this remedy afforded very little relief. How she rejoiced when, soon after eleven, the bell rang for her to attend the Queen, and assist in the operation of undressing! How still more heartily she rejoiced when the day's miseries were over, and with weary heart and brain and body, she was free to retire to rest!

The labour we delight in physics pain. But this was not a labour in which Frances delighted. She was too keenly sensible of its indignity, too keenly

alive to its terrible sameness. Fitted by nature and education to enjoy society, and with a lively appreciation of the pleasure of literary and musical companionship, she bent beneath the yoke of the dull etiquette that doomed her to almost solitary bondage. She loathed the removal from Kew to Windsor, and Windsor to Kew. She cared nothing for the changes in the *personnel* of the royal household. She could not interest herself in the paltry objects which held so large a place in the eyes of equerries and maids-of-honour. We fear it must be said that closer acquaintance with King and Queen did but convince her that very ordinary people may wear stars and hold levées.

The King's visit to Oxford, however, assumed the proportions of an event. Miss Burney was dragged in the wake of Majesty to Nuneham, where she was wholly overlooked in the crowd, and had equal difficulty in securing a hairdresser's services, and in making the way to her bedroom. Oxford she entered in the last of the long string of carriages which composed the royal procession; and then it fell to her lot to follow the Queen in all her perambulations, and to stand, half dead with fatigue and hunger, while Majesty partook with good appetite

of a sumptuous collation. She records that, being left alone for a moment in a room in Magdalene College, she sank exhausted into a chair; whereupon a humane equerry shared with her some bread and a few apricots which he had managed to conceal in his pockets. But the door opened: in strode the Queen; equerry and keeper of the robes sprang to their feet, concealed their refreshment, and hastened to resume their duties.

In spite, however, of exhaustion and hunger, Oxford revived in her mind a consciousness of pleasure which had long lain dormant. "She forgot, during one moment, that she was a waiting-maid, and felt as a woman of true genius might be expected to feel admidst venerable remains of antiquity, beautiful works of art, vast repositories of knowledge, and memorials of the illustrious dead. Had she still been what she was before her father induced her to take the most fatal step of her life, we can easily imagine what pleasure she would have derived from a visit to the noblest of English cities. She might, indeed, have been forced to travel in a hack chaise, and might not have worn so fine a gown of Chambrey gauze as that in which she tottered aft the royal party; but with what delight

would she have then paced the cloisters of Magdal
compared the antique gloom of Milton with
splendour of Christ Church, and looked down
the dome of the Radcliffe Library on the magnif
sea of turrets and battlements below! How g
would learned men have laid aside for a few h
Pindar's Odes and Aristotle's Ethics, to escort
author of 'Cecilia' from college to college! W
neat little banquets would she have found set o
their monastic cells! With what eagerness w
pictures, medals, and illuminated missals have
brought forth from the most mysterious cabinet
her amusement! How much she would have ha
hear and to tell about Johnson, as she walked
Pembroke; and about Reynolds, in the ante-ch
of New College! But these indulgences were no
one who had sold herself into bondage."

On the other hand, it must be confessed that
Burney does not seem to have been an adept i
philosophy of making the best of things. The "b
age" was hateful, no doubt; but she put for
no effort to lighten it. She was always eng
in weighing her chains, and the more heavily
weighed the better she was pleased. There
sunny side, even to court life, if she would have

and on the part both of King and Queen we must ow an honest desire to treat her with all possible dness. They could not know what she suffered, for y had not her sensibilities; nor could they by effort place themselves at her point of view. eir rigid insistence upon the etiquette to which y had always been accustomed did not proceed, Miss Burney confesses, from hardness of heart. ere was no hardness of heart in either of them; it se from sheer ignorance and want of personal ex- ience. Macaulay here, as elsewhere, has been led ray by his fondness for painting a striking picture. en he would have us believe that the established trine of the court was, that all sickness was to considered as a pretence until it proved fatal; t the only way in which the invalid could clear self from the suspicion of malingering, as it is led in the army, was to go on lacing and unlacing she fell down at the royal feet; he is unquestion- y guilty of exaggeration. Things were bad, but t quite so bad as that. And they were bad, cause both the King and Queen were allowed to main in foolish ignorance, and no one attempted make them y wiser. They supposed that all bout them cou not but be happy in breathing the

sacred atmosphere of the court, and such a con
Even Miss Burney made no exertion to disab
them of the false impression. If she were a vic
she was at all events a willing, or, let us say,
unresisting victim. Yet she lived in a coun
where she could certainly have claimed her freed
if she had liked.

It is a proof of her timidity and, we fear we m
frankly say, her servility, that she set aside the o
tures of that accomplished *dame d'esprit*, Mada
de Genlis, on her visit to England in 1785. S
admired Madame de Genlis greatly; pronounced
the sweetest as well as the most accomplis
Frenchwoman she had ever met with; but beca
she was no favourite with the English Court,
refused even to answer her "very elegant little no
Her defence of her conduct is not satisfactory.—
think of her," she writes, "as of one of the
among women.—I see her full of talents and cha
I am willing to believe her good, virtuous,
discreet, yet, with all this, the cry against he
so violent and so universal, and my belief in
innocence so wholly unsupported by proof in
favour, or any other argument than internal con
tion, from what I observed of her conduct

manners and conversation, when I saw her in London, that I know not how to risk a correspondence with her, till better able to satisfy others as well as I am satisfied myself." She was more gracious towards Madame de la Roche, the friend of Wieland, the author of 'Oberon,' and admitted her to an interview; though it does not seem to have been satisfactory. But few were the smiles she accorded to another of her foreign admirers, the French astronomer, Lalande, and in her account of the meeting between them, may be detected a nice flavour of subacid humour.

"What a reception awaited me!" she exclaims; "how unexpected a one from a famed and great astronomer! M. de Lalande advanced to meet me—I will not be quite positive it was on tip-toe, but certainly with a mixture of jerk and strut, that could not be quite flat-footed. He kissed his hand with the air of a *petit-maître*, and then broke forth into such an harangue of *éloges*, so solemn with regard to its own weight and importance, and so *fade* with respect to the little personage addressed, that I could not help thinking it lucky for the planets, stars, and sun, they were not bound to hear his comments, though obliged to bear his calculations.

"On my part, sundry profound reverences, with

it has a good look; but assure yourself he never expected to see this day.'

"'But would he, if guilty, have waited its chance? Was not all the world before him? Could he not have chosen any other place of residence?'

"'Yes;—but the shame, the disgrace of a flight.'

"'What is it all to the shame and disgrace of convicted guilt?'

"He made no answer.

"'And now,' I continued, 'shall I tell you, just in the same simple style, how I have been struck with the speakers and speeches I have yet heard?'

"He eagerly begged me to go on.

"'The whole of this public speaking is quite new to me. I was never in the House of Commons. It is all a new creation to me.'

"'And what a creation it is!" he exclaimed; 'how noble, how elevating! and—what an inhabitant for it!'

"I received his compliment with great courtesy, as an encouragement for me to proceed.

"I then began upon Mr. Burke; but I must give a very brief summary of my speech, as it could only be intelligible at full length from your having heard his. I told him that his opening had struck me with the

highest admiration of his powers, from the eloquence the imagination, the fire, the diversity of expression and the ready flow of language with which he seemed gifted, in a most superior manner, for any and every purpose to which rhetoric could lead. And when he came to his two narratives, (I continued), when he related the particulars of those dreadful murders he interested, he engaged, he at last overpowered me. I felt my cause lost.* I could hardly keep on my seat. My eyes dreaded a single glance towards a man so accused as Mr. Hastings; I wanted to sink on the floor, that they might be saved so painful a sight. I had no hope he could clear himself; not another wish in his favour remained. But when from the narration Mr. Burke proceeded to his own comments and declamations—when the charges of rapacity, cruelty, tyranny, were general, and made with all the violence of personal detestation, and continued and [illegible] with not any further fact or illustration [illegible] there appeared more of study than of truth, more of invective than of justice; and, in short, so little of proof to so much of passion, that in a very

* [illegible] confessed to having experienced a very similar feeling.

short time, I began to lift up my head, my seat was no longer uneasy, my eyes were indifferent which way they looked, or what object caught them; and before I was myself aware of the declension of Mr. Burke's powers over my feelings, I found myself a mere spectator in a public place, and looking all around it, with my opera-glass in my hand!"

It must be admitted that Miss Burney had the courage of her opinions.

The Diary also supplies many curious particulars of the King's illness, though in discussing its political aspects she writes too much like a partisan, and makes no allowances for the difficulties which beset the path of the responsible advisers of the Crown. She even resents as an insult the action of the House of Commons in investigating the character and progress of the malady. She did not reflect that the King's government must go on; if not under the direct influence of the King, then under that of a Regent. Her natural loyalty was so strengthened and intensified by her sympathy with the afflicted monarch that she was unable to look at the question with unprejudiced eyes. It would have been a fair subject of inquiry what restrictions should be entailed upon the regency, and she was quite at liberty to

choose between the plan proposed by Pitt and th plan proposed by Fox. But Miss Burney would hav no regency at all; and apparently thought that th country could be governed just as well under a ma king as under a sane one.

For two years after the King's recovery Miss Burn remained at Court, though it was evident to b friends that her health and spirits were failing. Sh grew weaker daily, and it was only at terrible co both physical and mental, that she accomplished b duties. People openly said that the life was killi Miss Burney, and wondered why her father did n interfere. The fact was that he saw nothing clear in the glamour of delight which surrounded him the thought of his daughter's intimate relations wi royalty. He was an affectionate father, and general a prudent one; but he could think of nothing mo exalted or gratifying than to live in the constant pr sence of the King and Queen. "Accident," howev on the 28th of May, 1790, brought him into contu with his daughter, and ensured a three hou conference—the only conference of that lengt they had had in four years. She seized this opp

nity of disclosing her feelings. To use her own nguage :—

"I spoke my high and constant veneration for my oyal Mistress, her merits, her virtues, her con-escension, and even her peculiar kindness towards e. But I owned the species of life distasteful to me ; was lost to all private comfort, dead to all domestic ndearment ; I was worn with want of rest, and tigued with laborious watchfulness and attendance. ly time was devoted to official duties ; and all that life was dearest to me—my friends, my chosen ciety, my best affections—lived now in my mind nly by recollection, and rested upon that with othing but bitter regret. With relations the most eservedly dear, with friends of almost unequalled oodness, I lived like an orphan—like one who had o natural ties, and must make her way as she would y those that were factitious. Melancholy was the istence where happiness was excluded, though not complaint could be made! where the illustrious ersonages who were served possessed almost all uman excellence, — yet those who were their ser-ants, though treated with the most benevolent ondescension could never, in any part of the livelong

day, command liberty, or social intercourse, or repose!"

We have a suspicion that Miss Burney unbosomed herself to her father in less rounded periods. However that may be, he could not resist her sad tones and her pale suffering countenance. His eyes filled with tears, and he sobbed out,—"I have long been uneasy, though I have not spoken; . . . but . . . if you wish to resign—my house, my purse, my arms shall be ready to receive you back!"

Miss Burney now entertained a hope of speedy release. But she had not accurately appreciated the extent of her father's veneration for royalty and its belongings. It was, in one sense, a disinterested veneration; for Miss Burney had lost rather than profited by her connection with the Court, and he himself had not been a whit the better for it. Still it was pleasant to speak of "my daughter, the keeper of the robes"; and it was a privilege to see her figuring in the royal train. The pleasure and the privilege were his; the misery and the prostration were his daughter's. Notwithstanding his effusive affection and their "conference," he took no steps to secure his daughter's liberty, and many began to think that the "order of release" would be signed only by

Death. She grew paler; she suffered from tremblings, from breathlessness, from sharp pains in the sides. She took bark, and she took wine, and she took opium; the doctors resorting alternately to stimulants and anodynes;—in vain, everybody said that she was in a decline. Thrice and four times in an evening she was forced to leave the card-table, and crawl to her own room, that by doses of hartshorn she might keep herself from swooning. It seems difficult to believe that the Queen was ignorant of her condition, and yet equally difficult to believe that she realized it. For she was certainly fond of the Burney, and neither she nor the King could wish to immolate a keeper of the robes on the altar of etiquette. We suppose that royal eyes glance but carelessly at their inferiors; and as Miss Burney made no sign, the Queen probably continued unsuspicious of the real danger of her condition.

At length Society took up the victim's cause. Horace Walpole wrote to her in terms that did him credit. "Were your talents," he said, "given to be buried in obscurity? You have retired from the world to a closet at Court,—where, indeed, you will still discover mankind, though not disclose it; for if you could penetrate its characters in the earliest glimpse

of its superficies, will it escape your piercing eye when it shrinks from your inspection, knowing that you have the mirror of truth in your pocket?" Mr. Windham was so justly indignant with Dr. Burney that he determined to set the Literary Club upon him. Boswell obtained an interview with the martyr at the choir gate of St. George's Chapel, and poured out his voluble anger:—"I am extremely glad to see you, indeed," he cried, "but very sorry to see you here. My dear ma'am, why do you stay?—it won't do, ma'am! you must resign!—we can put up with it no longer. I told my good host the Bishop of Carlisle so last night; we are all grown quite outrageous." On her leaving the church, he accompanied her, remarking, "If you do not quit, ma'am, very soon, some violent measures, I assure you, will be taken. We shall address Dr. Burney in a body: I am ready to make the harangue myself. We shall take upon him all at once." Edmund Burke was less courteous but not less zealous in her cause; and he was seconded by Sir Joshua Reynolds, and all the leading men of the world of art and letters. The result was that Dr. Burney was himself compelled to set aside his obstinate loyalty, and give Frances permission to send in her letter of resignation. Then arose a little

difficulty with Frances herself. See could not summon courage to present the memorial; her heart always failed her when she saw the Queen's entire freedom from such an expectation; "for though" (she says) "I was frequently so ill in her presence that I could hardly stand, I saw she concluded me, while life remained, inevitably hers."

At length, the memorial was written and presented, through Mrs. Schwellenberg. But here, for the benefit of those who know nothing of the awful terrors of life at Court, we must quote Miss Burney's own words:—

"Mrs. Schwellenberg took it, and promised me her services, but desired to know its contents. I begged vainly to be excused speaking them. She persisted, and I then was compelled to own they contained my resignation.

"How aghast she looked!—how inflamed with wrath!—how petrified with astonishment! It was truly a dreadful moment to me.

"She expostulated on such a step, as if it led to destruction; she offered to save me from it, as if the peace of my life depended on averting it; and she menaced me with its bad consequences, as if life itself, removed from these walls, would become an evil.

"I plainly recapitulated the suffering state i which I had lived for the last three months; th difficulty with which I had waded through even th most common fatigues of the day; the constraint attendance, however honourable, to an invalid and the impracticability of pursuing such a li when thus enfeebled, with the smallest chance of ev recovering the health and strength which it ha demolished.

"To all this she began a vehement eulogiu on the superior happiness and blessing of m lot, while under such a protection; and angri exhorted me not to forfeit what I could nev regain.

"I then frankly begged her to forbear so painf a discussion, and told her the memorial was from m father as well as myself - that I had no right authority to hesitate in delivering it — that th Queen herself was prepared to expect it—and th I had promised my father not to go again Windsor till it was presented. I entreated he therefore, to have the goodness to show it o...

"This was unanswerable, and she left me with th

paper in her hand, slowly conveying it to its place of destination.

"Just as she was gone, I was called to Dr. Gisborne; or rather, without being called, I found him in my room as I returned to it.

"Think if my mind, now, wanted not medicine the most! I told him, however, my corporeal complaints; and he ordered me opium and three glasses of wine in the day, and recommended rest to me, and an application to retire to my friends for some weeks, as freedom from anxiety was as necessary to my restoration as freedom from attendance."

What Miss Burney really wanted was a little more resolution. Why had she such a craven fear of the Schwellenberg? such an exaggerated awe of the Queen? We are forced to the conclusion that with all her talents she was deficient in mental energy; or else we must suppose that the life she had led for five years had crushed out her self-reliance and self-respect.

The Queen received the memorial graciously, but instead of accepting the resignation, suggested leave of absence for six weeks. This would not do. Miss Burney's nervous system had utterly broken down; and the doctors predicted the worse conse-

quences if she were not entirely relieved from the burden that pressed upon her so heavily. Dr. Burney, thoroughly alarmed, used plain language, and insisted that his daughter should and must retire. "A scene almost horrible ensued, when I told Cerbera [Mrs. Schwellenberg] the offer was declined. She was too much enraged for disguise, and uttered the most furious expressions of indignant contempt at our proceedings. I am sure she would gladly have confined us in the Bastile, had England such a misery, as a fit place to bring us to ourselves, from a daring so outrageous against imperial wishes."

Eventually the Queen promised that, after the next birthday, the Burney should be released. The promise was not very punctually kept; but in July she was really set free. The prison-door was thrown open and the captive walked forth, with a pension of £100 a year, to console her for her five years' servitude.

Her last interview with the Queen is thus described:—

"When the Queen commanded me to follow her to her closet I was, indeed, in much emotion; but I told her that, as what had passed from Mrs. Schwellenberg in the morning had given me to understand her Majesty was fixed in her munificent intention, nec-

withstanding what I had most unaffectedly urged against it—

"'Certainly,' she interrupted, 'I shall certainly do it.'

"'Yet so little,' I continued, 'had I thought it right to dwell upon such an expectation, that, in the belief your Majesty would yet take it into further consideration, I had not even written it to my father.'

"'Your father,' she again interrupted me, 'has nothing to do with it; it is solely from *me* to *you*.'

"'Let me then humbly entreat," I cried, "still in some measure to be considered as a servant of your Majesty, either as reader, or to assist occasionally, if Mlle. Jacobi [her successor] should be ill.

"She looked most graciously pleased, and immediately closed in with the proposal, saying, 'When your health is restored,—perhaps sometimes.'

"I then fervently poured forth my thanks for all her goodness, and my prayers for her felicity.

"She had her handkerchief in her hand or at her eyes the whole time. I was so much moved by her condescending kindness, that as soon as I got out of the closet I nearly sobbed. I went to help Mlle. Jacobi

to put up the jewels, that my emotion might the le
be observed. The King then came into the room. H
immediately advanced to the window, where I stoo
to speak to me. I was not then able to comport my
self steadily. I was forced to turn my head away fro
him. He stood still and silent for some minute
waiting to see if I should turn about; but I could no
recover myself sufficiently to face him, strange as
was to do otherwise; and perceiving me quite over
come, he walked away, and I saw him no more.

"His kindness, his goodness, his benignity, neve
shall I forget,—never shall I think of, but with fres
gratitude and reverential affection.

"They were now all going—I took, for the last time
the cloak of the Queen, and, putting it over he
shoulders, slightly ventured to press them, earnestly
though in a low voice, saying, 'God Almighty bles
your Majesty!'

"She turned round, and, putting her hand upon m
unglove! arm, pressed it with the greatest kindness
and said, 'May you be happy!'

"She left me overwhelmed with tender gratitude
The three eldest Princesses were in the next room
they came to me the moment the Queen went onward
Princess Anne and Princess Elizabeth each too

a hand, and the Princess Royal put hers over them. I could speak to none of them; but they repeated, 'I wish you happy!—I wish you health!' again and again, with the sweetest eagerness.

"They then set off for Kew.

"Here, therefore, end my Court Annals; after having lived in the service of her Majesty five years within ten days—from July 17, 1786, to July 7, 1791."

On the whole the impression which an unprejudiced reader will gather from a perusal of the Diary is, we think, favourable to the Royal Family. Miss Burney appears, on her own showing, to have been treated by both King and Queen, as well as by the Princesses, with great good nature and considerable kindness. If some want of thought may be charged against the Queen, it may on the other hand be urged that she knew nothing of the really serious character of Miss Burney's illness, and that when she did, she was far from treating it with indifference. In giving her a place in the Royal household she probably thought she was conferring a great favour, by securing her against the accidents of fortune, and making permanent provision for her support. We are not sure that the duties were so onerous as Macaulay supposes. That they were inappropriate for Miss Burney, and that the separation which

they entailed from her family and friends acted most injuriously upon her nervous system, may be granted, but we do not think they exceeded the ordinary strength of a healthy young woman. Nor are we disposed to agree with those who condemn the royal pension as mean and inadequate. According to the then standard of salaries, it was certainly no insufficient acknowledgment of only five years' service. The discomfort, and hardships which Miss Burney undoubtedly experienced were really due to the tyrannical *régime* of the Schwellenberg. So far as the royal family are concerned, they appear to much advantage in Miss Burney's faithful pages, which afford in all respects, in matter as in style, in subject as in treatment, a pleasing contrast to those of the Clerk of the Closet to George IV., the late Mr. Greville.

V.

SURROUNDED by the comforts of home, and the attentions of her friends, Miss Burney soon recovered her health and spirits. She tasted once more the pleasure of bright and witty conversation. Once more she found herself the centre of a brilliant coterie of wits and statesmen. Instead of migrating between Kew and Windsor, and Windsor and Kew, she was free to travel where she listed; and by easy stages she went from place to place, visiting stately cathedrals and exploring beautiful landscapes. We read of her as crossing country to the lovely shores of Sidmouth, passing through Farnham, Winchester, Salisbury, Wilton, and Dorchester. Crossing the Exe, she inspected Powderham Castle; thence she journeyed to Collumpton and its church, "an extremely rich Gothic structure"; to Taunton, Bridgewater, and the ruins of Glastonbury Abbey. By way of Wells she passed on to Bath, and revived the memories of Mrs. Thrale,

Mrs. Montagu, Mrs. Cholmley, and others of her
friends. She met there with Miss Trimmer, daughter
the Mrs. Trimmer of educational celebrity; with
beautiful Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, and
future successor, Lady Elizabeth Forster. Of Duch
Georgiana, she says:—"I did not find so much beauty
her as I expected, notwithstanding the variations
accounts; but I found far more of manner, politene
and gentle quiet. She seems by nature to possess
highest animal spirits, but she appeared to me
happy. I thought she looked oppressed within, thou
there is a native cheerfulness about her which I fa
scarce ever deserts her. There is in her fa
especially when she speaks, a sweetness of go
humour and obligingness that seem to be the natu
and instinctive qualities of her disposition; joined
an openness of countenance that announces
endowed by nature with a character intended whe
for honesty, fairness, and good purposes."

Returning to London, she resumed her literary p
suits, and entered again on the old pleasant life.
sister, now Mrs. Phillips, was settled near Leatherhe
in Surrey, and Frances paid her frequent visits.
also visited her father's old friend, Mr Lock,
lived at Norbury Park, in the same neighbourho

Thus she became acquainted with a "a colony of French exiles," who had taken up their residence at Juniper Hall. She had strong prejudices, at first, against them; for she was the very incarnation of Toryism, and as these immigrants were all attached to the democratic constitution of 1791, they offended her Royalist principles. But she could not long resist the attraction of a society which exactly suited her taste. She was fond of brilliant conversation, and no conversation could excel that of those polished and clever Frenchmen. She was keenly sensible to the charm of fine manners; and better-mannered persons could nowhere be found than Madame de Staël—Talleyrand—the Duke of Montmorency, and the ex-minister, M. de Narbonne. How could she remain insensible to so much wit and eloquence, so much knowledge of the world, and such epigrammatic subtlety of observation?

Along with M. de Narbonne must be named his intimate and devoted friend, M. D'Arblay, who had gained distinction as the Adjutant-General of Lafayette, and commanded respect by his amiable character, taste for letters, handsome person, and attractive manners.

Miss Burney was soon at home amongst these new and delightful friends. Of Madame de Staël she

writes:—"She is a woman of the first abilities, I think, I have ever seen: she is more in the style of Mrs. Thrale (!) than of any other celebrated character but she has infinitely more depth, and seems a even profound politician and metaphysician. She has suffered us to hear some of her works in MS., which are truly wonderful for powers both of thinking and expression.... She exactly resembles Mrs. Thrale in the ardour and warmth of her temper and partialities. I find her impossible to resist...." Of M. de Narbonne she speaks as bearing the highest character for goodness, parts, sweetness of manner and ready wit. Talleyrand is "one of the most members, and one of the most charming, of the exquisite set. His powers of entertainment are astonishing, both in information and raillery." While as for M. D'Arblay, he is "one of the most singularly interesting characters that can ever have been formed. He has a sincerity, a frankness, a ingenuous openness of nature, that I had been unjust enough to think could not belong to a Frenchman. With all this, which is his military profession, he is passionately fond of literature, a most delicate critic in his own language, well versed both in Italian and German, and a very elegant poet. He

has just undertaken to become my French master for pronunciation, and he gives me long daily lessons in reading."

The result of these daily lessons was soon apparent. Frances fell in love with the ruined, penniless French *émigré*, and he fell in love with her. At length, on good assurance that it would not be refused, he made her an offer of marriage. Dr. Burney reluctantly consented. As the loving couple had only Miss Burney's pension, a small annuity, and her literary talents, to depend upon, the reluctance was not unnatural; but the marriage was celebrated in Mickleham Church on the 31st of July, 1793. It proved a happy union, in spite of difference of age, creed, and nationality, and neither husband nor wife had cause to regret it. The reasonable predictions of prudent friends were never more completely falsified.

Madame D'Arblay at once set to work to provide for her husband and herself. She completed a tragedy which she had begun in the time of her *duresse* at Kew, and shortly after the birth of her first child, in 1795, it was acted. But her talent was not dramatic, and certainly the gods had not made her poetical; its failure, therefore, need not excite our surprise.

'Edwy and Elgiva' ran only one night. At a later period she wrote a comedy, entitled 'Love and Fashion,' which was accepted at Covent Garden; but her father prudently interfered and induced her to withdraw it, though she thereby lost £400, the sum offered for the copyright. £400, however, could not have compensated for the probable injury to her reputation. In 1796 she produced her third novel, 'Camilla.' It was published by subscription, and met with so great a success that, in three months, only 500 copies remained of an edition of 4000. The fortunate authoress realized upwards of 3000 guineas by this venture. Yet the critic is compelled to say that it exhibits a marked decline of power. There is much lively character-painting, but the plot is poor, and the style laboured and oppressive. Miss Burney has lost the lightness of touch, the vivacity and the ease which make 'Evelina' and 'Cecilia' so charming. The heroine, Camilla, however, is admirable; and few of Miss Burney's characters are better conceived or more clearly drawn than Camilla's uncle. "Vehement and simple as a child; ignorant, and attributing all his mistakes to his unfortunate want of Greek and Latin, the result of an idle youth, he is the kindest hearted, and most injudicious of

men. Especially delightful in his innocence; it invests him with a delicacy which creates veneration. His goodness might be the result of a warm heart, but his ingenuous ignorance of evil has something sacred and child-like; whilst the pertinacity with which he considers every blunder the result of book ignorance, and every good or courageous act of book knowledge, is as provoking as his strange fancy for match-making."

Madame D'Arblay's literary career was interrupted by the peace of Amiens. Her husband seized the opportunity it offered of returning to his native land; but war again breaking out in 1803, he and his family were compelled to remain in France for the next ten years. Through the influence of Lauriston and Lafayette, he had received from the French government a promise that he should be reinstated in his military rank; but on his making a stipulation that he should never be compelled to serve against his wife's countrymen, Napoleon revoked the promise, and ordered his commission to be cancelled. He obtained, however, a subordinate position in one of the ministerial offices, and on its salary and a small pension, contrived to support his family.

In 1812, when Napoleon had set out on his fatal Russian expedition, Madame D'Arblay, with her son, obtained permission to visit Newfoundland. They set sail from Dunkirk, but the ship in which they had embarked was happily captured by an English cruiser, and they were safely conveyed to England. Her favourite sister, Susannah, was dead, but her father was still living, though bending beneath the weight of eighty-six years. He lived for more than a twelve-month after her return; lived long enough to witness the publication of her last novel, 'The Wanderer': her last and worst. Pecuniarily it was not a failure: but, as a work of art, it is almost beneath contempt, and we can only regret that Madame D'Arblay ever wrote it. Its style is, as Macaulay justly says, "a sort of broken Johnsonese, a barbarous *patois*, bearing the same relation to the language of 'Rasselas,' which the gibberish of the negroes of Jamaica bears to the English of the House of Lords. Sometimes it reminds us of the finest, that is to say, the vilest, parts of Mr. Galt's novels; sometimes of the perorations at Exeter Hall; sometimes of the leading articles of the *Morning Post*. But it most resembles the puffs of Mr. Rowland and Dr. Goss. It matters not what ideas are clothed in such a style. The

genius of Shakspeare and Byron united, would not save a work so written from general derision." For ourselves we waded through it some years ago; but have recently failed in an attempt to accomplish its reperusal.

'The Wanderer' was published in 1814; and in the same year her son Alexander, a young man of high promise, was sent to Cambridge. The restoration of the Bourbons shed a gleam of sunshine on the fortunes of the D'Arblay family. The General was restored to his rank and its emoluments, and enabled to take up that social position which he so fully deserved. But, as is so often the case, this late summer was destined to be a brief one. In the spring of 1817 he was seized with an attack of jaundice. This was followed by an internal complaint, which baffled the skill of his medical attendants. He tried the waters of Bath, but with no good result. Weaker he grew, and weaker, until his wife and son were compelled to recognise, what the sufferer himself had for some time foreseen, the beginning of the end. In March, 1818, he revived a little; but April found him suffering from intense pain, and terribly exhausted. On the 1st of May he received the last rites of the Roman Church; and on the 3rd he

died. His last hours are thus described by Madame D'Arblay.

"He bent forward, as he was supported nearly upright by pillows in his bed . . . and taking my hand, and holding it between both his own, he impressively said, 'Je ne sais si ce sera le dernier mot, mais ce sera la dernière pensée—*notre réunion*' . . .' Oh, words the most precious that ever the tenderest of husbands left for balm to the lacerated heart of a surviving wife! I fastened my lips on his loved hands, but spoke not. It was not then that those words were my blessing! They awed—they thrilled—more than they solaced me. How little knew I then that he should speak to me no more!

"Towards evening I sat watching in my arm-chair, and Alex. remained constantly with me. His sleep was so calm that an hour passed in which I indulged the hope that a favourable crisis was arriving, that a turn would take place by which his vital powers would be restored . . . but . . . when the hour was succeeded by another hour, when I saw a universal stillness in the whole frame, such as seemed to tarrate all around, I began to be strangely moved. 'Alex.' I whispered, 'this sleep is critical! a crisis arrives.' Pray God—Almighty God!—that

it be for—' I could not proceed. Alex. looked aghast, but firm. I sent him to call Payne. I intimated to her my opinion that this sleep was important, but kept a composure astonishing, for when no one would give any encouragement, I compelled myself to appear not to want it, to deter them from giving me despair.

"Another hour passed of concentrated feelings, of breathless dread.

"His face had still its unruffled serenity, but methought the hands were turning cold; I covered them; I watched over the head of my beloved; I took new flannel to roll over his feet; the stillness grew more awful; the skin became colder.

"Alex., my dear Alex., proposed calling in Mr. Tudor, and ran off for him.

"I leant over him now with sal volatile to his temple, his forehead, the palms of his hands, but I had no courage to feel his pulse, to touch his lips."

"Mr. Tudor came; he put his hand upon the heart, the noblest of hearts, and pronounced that all was over."

This great affliction was not the only one which Madame D'Arblay was called upon to endure before she herself passed from the weary scene. She out-

lived all the members of her family, and, deepest grief of all, she survived her only son. This able and accomplished gentleman, who inherited much of his mother's talent, had taken holy orders, risen into popularity as an eloquent preacher, and as minister of Ely Chapel, Holborn, had opened up to him a wide sphere of usefulness. But he was seized with an attack of influenza, in January, 1837, which he had not strength to resist; and after an illness of only three weeks, succumbed to its violence. The blow was severe; and though the bereaved mother bore it with religious submission, it is scarcely an exaggeration to say that she never smiled again. In 1839 her friends noticed signs of great and increasing debility. Her sight and hearing nearly failed her. Afterwards she suffered much from sleepless nights and spectral illusions. She became more and more feeble; her mind frequently wandered; but in her intervals of consciousness and composure, she was perfectly cheerful, listened delightedly to portions of St. John's Gospel, and spent much time in silent prayer. So at last the end came; a peaceful end; and on the [illegible] of January, 1840, the 40th anniversary of the death of her beloved sister Susannah, without a struggle or a groan, Frances D'Arblay passed to her rest.

MRS. ELIZABETH INCHBALD.

A.D. 1753–1821.

I.

We have now to tell the story of a Woman who in ome respects may fairly be considered Representative, hough she made no very conspicuous figure in what is nown as Society, and does not occupy a very high osition in the republic of Letters. Her life was nore remarkable than her works, and her character s a more interesting study than her life. Yet had he possessed less of marked individuality, and had her areer permitted fewer noticeable incidents, she must till have been remembered as a dramatist of some bility, and a novelist of no mean order; as the uthor of 'Such Things Are,' and of 'A Simple tory,' and 'Nature and Art.' In 'A Simple tory' she presents us with one of the most ttractive heroines in English fiction; and in 'Nature

and Art' she has conceived one of the most pathetic and striking situations.

Elizabeth Simpson was born at the farm of Standingfield, near Bury St. Edmunds, on the 15th of October, 1753. She came of a respectable Roman Catholic family, and was one of eight children. Like her four sisters, she was distinguished from childhood by her personal charms; unlike them, she suffered for some years from an imperfection of utterance which rendered her almost unintelligible. This circumstance induced her to turn for amusement to her books, and her multifarious reading went far to compensate for the defective education which was all she could procure after her father's premature death. Probably it also originated that desire for "seeing the world" which developed into a passion before she was thirteen years old. All the family seem to have had a predilection for the stage; and Elizabeth early determined on embracing the dramatic profession. For this purpose she set herself to conquer, or at least mitigate, her difficulty of articulation. Writing out all the words which proved stumbling-blocks to a free exercise of speech, she carried the manuscript about with her everywhere, and in spare moments

repeated them aloud, slowly and distinctly. Her friends opposing her wishes, as friends generally do, she secretly addressed herself to Mr. Griffith, the Norwich manager, soliciting an engagement. His polite refusal led to further correspondence, and the romantic Elizabeth fell in love with a man she had never seen. But neither letters nor love fulfilled her yearning after "the great world"; and on the 11th of April, 1772, she left her mother's house early in the morning, unperceived, and by the Norwich stage proceeded to London,—a daring adventure for a girl of eighteen, of lovely person and romantic disposition. Her confidence in herself, however, was complete, and she was troubled by no emotion of fear. She was not absolutely a stranger to London, having visited it in the previous year, when she made the acquaintance of her future husband, Mr. Inchbald; and she had friends under whose roof she hoped to find an asylum. Unfortunately, they had left for Wales, and then for the first time she felt something like alarm. The owner of the house, observing her distress, invited her to remain with his family for the night. She accepted the offer with gratitude; but, suddenly remembering the stories of London roguery that had reached the quiet villages of Suffolk,

she took fright at the appearance of an elderly female, and snatching up her bandbox, rushed out of the house.

As she hurried along the street with disordered steps, she saw in a window the well-known card, "Lodgings to Let," entered the house, and represented herself as a milliner's apprentice, whose mistress had occasion for her bed, on the arrival of some unexpected visitors from the country. She had scarcely delivered herself of this wild invention, when, turning her head, she saw behind her the kind-hearted man from whose house she had fled, and who had naturally followed her in quest of an explanation. Ashamed of her position, she again meditated flight; but the door was locked upon her, and a constable's intervention threatened. Happily, a boy of twelve, who was present, sympathised with her distress, and bursting into tears, declared "he would never go to school again, unless they let the young lady go."

Delivered at his request, this beautiful young girl wandered about the streets until two in the morning, when arriving at the White Swan on Holborn Bridge, she represented herself as a traveller disappointed in obtaining a place in the York stage, and obtained a bedroom,—into which, however, the mistrustful

hostess took care to lock her! Here she remained for ten days, going out to dine with imaginary friends on repasts as unsubstantial as Duke Humphrey's, and really subsisting on penny rolls and cold water.

She had a sister, a Mrs. Dorothy Hunt, "married and settled" in London; and her house eventually afforded her a safe shelter, while she used the most indefatigable exertions to procure a theatrical engagement. One of the managers to whom she applied was a Mr. Dodd. He was struck by her beauty and offered her terms; but presuming on her youth and simplicity, made love to her in such wise that the offended lady dashed a basin of hot water in his face, and finally broke off the negotiation. By this time she was reconciled to her mother, and surrounded by her friends. She renewed her acquaintance with Mr. Inchbald, who advised her on the best measures for fulfilling her hopes, and ventured to address her as a suitor. He had proposed to her while she was still at Standingfield, and been refused. Now, however, he was more fortunate. Elizabeth saw the dangers to which a beautiful unmarried woman would be exposed in the theatrical world, and after some slight hesitation accepted Mr. Inchbald's offer,

humble condition, for she knew she could not hope to dazzle and conquer the world in her profession. But a courageous and a resolute woman, she would not abandon the path she had marked out for herself. If she could not triumph through genius, she would win a tolerable success by application. She availed herself, therefore, of her husband's advice. The two walked abroad—up hill and along the sea-shore—reciting their parts, and studying expression and gesture. She took every opportunity, moreover, of storing her mind with knowledge, and read attentively every book that came in her way. It will illustrate the labours of the theatrical profession, and, at the same time, demonstrate the industry, intelligence, and varied capacity of Mrs. Inchbald, if we transcribe the list of characters which she performed in a single month :—

Oct. 2.	Mrs. Strickland in	Suspicious Husband.
„ 4.	Imogen . . .	Cymbeline.
„ 5.	Miss Neville . .	She Stoops to Conquer.
„ 9.	Lucia	Cato.
„ 10.	The Queen . . .	Spanish Friar (Dryden's.)
„ 12.	Miss Aubrey . .	Fashionable Lover.
„ 14.	Belvidera . . .	Venice Preserved.

Oct. 16.	Desdamona . .	Othello.
	Tragic Muse and Rosalind . . .	Jubilee.*
,, 18.	Monimia . . .	Orphan (Otway's).
,, 19.	Palmira	Mahomet.
,, 20.	Fanny	Clandestine Marriage.
,, 25.	Silvia	Recruiting Officer.
,, 26.	Jane Shore . .	Jane Shore.
,, 30.	Calphurnia . .	Julius Cæsar.

What drudgery is here! What an incessant strain on the faculties! How could the rendering of so many and such diverse characters be other than mechanical? From Imogen to Silvia what a leap! But probably Mrs. Inchbald contented herself with looking charming, delivering her speeches prettily and presenting a fairly intellectual version of each character. She did not attempt to "create." And if she failed to astonish or command or enchant her audiences, she did not offend them.

In June, 1776, when at Edinburgh, Mr. Inchbald had

* This was a kind of masquerade in which Shakspeare's characters were introduced. It was written for the Shakspeare Jubilee at Stratford upon-Avon in 1777.

a dispute with his audience, which induced him and his wife to throw up their engagements, and quit the city. He had some skill with the brush, and desiring to improve it by lessons from a French artist, he resolved on going to Paris. His wife rejoiced at the opportunity of studying the language. They spent some pleasant weeks in seeing all that Paris had to show; and then, as funds failed them, returned to England. At first, being unable to obtain any engagements, they suffered very great distress; several times, while at Brighton, dispensed with dinner and tea, and once, instead of dining, went into the fields to eat tulips. Mr. Inchbald, in November, procured an engagement at Liverpool for himself and his wife. It proved a fortunate one, for it led to their acquaintance with Mrs. Siddons, whose star was then scarcely risen above the horizon, and, through her, with the Kembles. From Liverpool they proceeded in January, 1777, to York, where Mrs. Inchbald first felt a desire to give expression to her thought and fancy, and began, in outline, her 'Simple Story.' Her leisure she employed in reading, and reading methodically. This was a happy period of her life, notwithstanding occasional disagreements with her husband, due, sometimes, to her love of admiration, which provoked

his jealousy, and sometimes to her exactness in money matters, which irritated his temper. He was devotedly attached to his beautiful wife, and she, on her part, seems to have cherished a sincere esteem for him. But she was still in the prime of her youth, while he was advancing towards middle age, and she could not deny herself the pleasure of receiving the homage of her admirers, conscious as she was of her power to bend her self-respect. Moreover, her temper was singularly variable; and in a moment the sunshine vanished from her lovely face to be succeeded by a heavy cloud. Her imperiousness knew no bounds; she expected instant obedience if she expressed a wish or uttered a command. Mr. Inchbald, as we have said, painted—as he acted—"indifferently well." He was always making portraits of his wife, which failed to convey any accurate idea of her charms. But one day, he had copied with some skill a likeness of Garrick, and was so engrossed in his success, that when summoned to dinner he forgot to obey. This neglect aroused Mrs. Inchbald to such an excess that she seized the painting and tore it in pieces.

The Kembles and the Inchbalds were now so intimate that they travelled together, lived together, read together, and acted together. This artistic harmony

prevailed for several months, until the Kembles and Mrs. Siddons were called away to Liverpool by a professional engagement. Mr. and Mrs. Inchbald went south to Canterbury, where they met with Holcroft, then an actor, afterwards of some repute as a novelist and dramatist. His 'Road to Ruin' still holds the stage. Their next destination was York, where old Tate Wilkinson, the well-known eccentric manager, offered them a permanent position. They left York, however, in May, and migrated to Leeds, where, on the 5th of June, 1779, their married life was terminated by the sudden death, from disease of the heart, of Mr. Inchbald. "A day of horror," wrote Mrs Inchbald, "followed by a week of *grief, horror*, and *almost despair*."

Mrs. Inchbald was now a widow at the age of 26. In the first months of her bereavement she was fortunate in securing the advice and assistance of John Philip Kemble, who conducted himself like a true gentleman and a sincere friend. She appears to have felt a strong admiration for his many generous and chivalrous qualities, and, in her own candid phrase, "would have jumped to have him"; but though he respected and admired her, he felt no warmer feelings. On the other hand, her suitors were many; some,

presuming on her defenceless position and her profession as an actress, venturing upon dishonourable proposals, which were promptly and sternly rejected, not a few, like Suett, the comedian, eager and willing to enter into a matrimonial alliance with so charming and prudent a woman.

Towards the close of 1780, Mrs. Inchbald quitted the provinces, and having obtained an engagement at Covent Garden Theatre, made her appearance before a London audience. As Lady Touchwood, in Mrs. Cowley's clever comedy of 'The Belle's Stratagem,' she was tolerably successful. She also acted Bellario in Beaumont and Fletcher's 'Philaster,' but suffered by comparison with Mrs. Yates, who had formerly played the part. The manager, Colman, thought sufficiently well of her abilities to raise her salary to—three pounds a week (then regarded as a very satisfactory remuneration); but insisted on the disagreeable condition that she should walk in pantomime. Meantime, [illegible] employed in writing farces, though experiencing no little difficulty in getting them acted. It was not until the 6th of July, 1784, that she succeeded in producing 'The Mogul Tale' at the

Haymarket. She acted in it, and it "went off with great applause."

Here we may pause to present an inventory of the charms of this remarkable woman, as drawn up by some fond admirer, and endorsed by herself on the candid manuscript, "Description of Me." Thus it runs:—

"*Age.* Between thirty and forty, which, in the register of a lady's birth, means a little turned of thirty.

"*Height.* Above the middle size, and rather tall.

"*Figure.* Handsome, and striking in its general air, but a little too stiff and erect.

"*Shape.* Rather too fond of sharp angles.

"*Skin.* By nature fair, though a little freckled, and with a tinge of sand, which is the colour of her eyelashes, but made coarse by ill-treatment upon her cheeks and arms.

"*Hair.* Of a sandy auburn, and rather too straight as well as thin.

"*Face.* Beautiful in effect, and beautiful in every feature.

"*Countenance.* Full of spirit and sweetness; excessively interesting, and, without indelicacy, voluptuous.

"*Dress.* Always becoming; and very seldom worth so much as eight pence."

The gentleman who drew up this *catalogue raisonné* may have been an admirer, but was certainly no flatterer. As a set-off against it, let us take the letter which John Philip Kemble addressed her on the success of her first dramatic composition. It is dated Liverpool, July 17, 1784:—

"Next to your *self*, nobody can be more inclined to think highly of your *productions* than I am; but, alas! my poetical days, I believe, are gone by. In my best pretensions, I was but an indifferent rhymer, nor in my vainest moments ever thought any thing I did fit to be called poetry. I have ransacked my brains for apt parallels, but to no purpose. I cannot pay you a compliment in verse too high for what I truly think of you in prose; and I might tell you, that poetry is too essentially fictitious to answer the purposes of real esteem, and to express deserved praise. The fault, however, at present, is in me, not in the *art*. I repeated you some lines of my translation from Ovid, when I was in town: I thought to have finished the Epistle in the country; but no such thing. I have laboured and laboured so long in vain at it, that it is now thrown aside from an absolute

conscience of wasting so much time to no manner of purpose. The truth is, my health declines every day. I have neither spirits (in which I never abounded) nor genius (of which inclination, perhaps, wholly supplied the place) to attempt any thing for my improvement in polite letters. You know me, I believe, well enough to feel for me when I say, but with all my ambition I am afraid I shall live and die a common fellow. Your regular and continent life gives you the assurance of many healthful years; and your uncommon talents, having now forced themselves into notice, will crown you with growing reputation. If I could write, I would; I cannot—so you must receive esteem instead of flattery, and sincerity for wit, when I swear there is no *woman* I more truly admire, nor any *man* whose abilities I more highly esteem."

Mrs. Inchbald's success as an author did not fail to increase her attractions as a woman. Among those who dangled at her heels was Sir Charles Bunbury, a wit, a man of fashion, and a writer of agreeable *vers de Société*. He called frequently upon her, though not always admitted to an audience; he even insisted on her walking out with him, and she

thought at one time that his attentions were becoming very particular; but, after all, he never got beyond friendship. Perhaps he was alarmed by the capriciousness of her temper and the haughtiness of her independence. She appears to have cherished, we must own, a very cordial regard for this accomplished gentleman; and to the last always spoke of him with affectionate esteem. Yet it may be that she was not capable of love, and that her coldness had something to do with the indecision and ultimate retirement of such men as Sir Charles. Certainly she had many honourable suitors, and many excellent opportunities of contracting a reasonably happy union; but somehow or other the former always withdrew, and the latter was never completed. It may seem a small thing to say in commendation of Mrs. Inchbald that through all the vicissitudes of her career she preserved her self-respect, and that the most malignant scandal-monger never dared to asperse her reputation. In truth, it is a high eulogium. For Mrs. Inchbald was not only a lovely and fascinating woman, but an actress; and in those days chastity was the last virtue that an actress was suspected of possessing. In one of her autobiographical fragments Mrs. Inchbald says:—

"To have fixed the degrees and shades of female virtue, possessed at this time by the actresses of the Haymarket Theatre, would have been employment for an able casuist.

"One evening, about half an hour before the curtain was drawn up, some accident having happened in the dressing-room of one of the actresses, a woman of known intrigue, she ran in haste to the dressing-room of Mrs. Wells, to finish the business of her toilet. Mrs. Wells, who was the mistress of the well-known Captain Topham, shocked at the intrusion of a reprobated woman, who had a worse character than herself, quitted her own room and ran to Miss Farren's, crying, 'What would Captain Topham say, if I were to remain in such company?'

"No sooner had she entered the door, to which as an asylum she had fled, than Miss Farren flew out at the door, repeating, 'What would Lord Derby say, if I should be seen in such company?'"

With this Mrs. Wells, however, Mrs. Inchbald formed a close intimacy, which she refused to discontinue notwithstanding the evil reports that were circulated of her friend's follies and vices. And it is

to the credit at least of her charity, if not of prudence, that her friendship followed the unfortu woman to the close of her sad career in the madh and the gaol.

In 1784, her first comedy, 'I'll tell you Wha the title was Colman's,—met with a favour reception at the Haymarket. The cast inclu Parsons, Bensley, Palmer, Bannister, Mrs. Ba Mrs. Bulkeley, and Miss Farren. It is not, be it a a very good comedy. The characters lack disti ness; the plot is not clearly evolved; and language is commonplace. There are two or th passages of questionable humour which we co wish Mrs. Inchbald had never written. One the smartest speeches is that of Colonel Do right:—

"I don't like to see a woman cry, but I can't l to see a man; his tears come from so deep a sou —A man's tears always appear to have come a l journey; and therefore I notice them as strang that have gone through fatigue and trouble on th way;—while a woman's tears I consider as n neighbours that can call upon you when they like, generally drop in on all occasions."

Mrs. Inchbald was fond of money, and no doubt

received the £300 that represented her share of the proceeds of her play, with peculiar satisfaction. It is only just to say, however, that she was a woman of abundant charity to whom the distressed never appealed in vain, and that all her relatives profited by her bounty.

We must return once more to the story of her suitors, who were as numerous and as pertinacious as Penelope's. A Mr. Glover, who had first made her acquaintance at Hull, had followed her to York, and afterwards to London. Convinced that her genius, beauty, and virtue might adorn any station, he offered her his hand, proposing at the same time to settle upon her £500 a year. But she was still dreaming of becoming Lady Bunbury. Another votary was "Peter Pindar," the notorious Dr. Wolcot, but he does not appear to have been very earnest in his attentions. At a later date (1788) she became acquainted with Dr. Warren, a fashionable physician, and a handsome and agreeable man. He was married, however; and she limited their intercourse to a Platonic friendship. There can be no doubt that she admired him greatly, and, after her candid unconventional fashion, openly professed her admiration, walking

up and down Sackville Street, where he resided, in order to look up at his window, and contemplating his portrait as eagerly as any female devotee the portrait of her favourite saint. He died in 1797, and she affected to be penetrated with sorrow. It was a wild, fugitive fancy, — a caprice, — a whim, rather than a serious attachment: and, indeed, we are strongly inclined to doubt whether in the whole course of her career Mrs. Inchbald's *heart* was really moved.

We pass over her various farces to come to the production of her comedy, 'Such Things Are,' in 1787. This brought her in a comfortable little fortune of £900, which, with her usual prudence, she invested in the funds, making no alteration in her frugal mode of living. It is a good solid piece of work, with some striking situations, an interesting plot, and a striking contrast of characters in the arbitrary Sultan and the benevolent Mr. Haswell, a study, by the way, of the philanthropist Howard. The natural behaviour of the Turners and the Honourable Mr. Twineall might be relished, perhaps, even at the present day.

'Such Things Are' was followed by several successful farces, two of which, 'The Midnight Hour' and 'Animal Magnetism,' still hold the stage.

II.

HITHERTO Mrs. Inchbald's fame had been confined within the borders of the theatrical world; but in 1791, her novel, 'A Simple Story,' extended it wherever the English language was read and spoken. This, unquestionably, is one of the masterpieces of English fiction, and none but a woman of real genius could have written it. Yet, to define its special merits is not easy. The language never rises into a glowing or passionate eloquence, and embodies none of those pregnant reflections and philosophical maxims which we have learned to admire in the pages of George Eliot. Of pure description there is very little; and that little does not attain to the free, picturesqueness, and fidelity of Charlotte Brontë's sketches. The plot is full of interest, but free from sensational complications, and the characters have no marked individuality to impress them on the memory, as is the case with those of Dickens and Scott. Perhaps the title gives us

a clue to the excellent quality which has secured for Mrs. Inchbald's work an enduring reputation. It is, in very truth, a *simple* story. In all English fiction we know of nothing more natural, more unaffected. The pathos, as well as the humour, is spontaneous; there are no signs of effort, no attempts at elaboration. The narrative flows on like a clear, full, and tranquil stream, and carries the reader with it in a delightfully easy manner. We forget—we do not notice—the literary deficiencies; we care very little about occasional defects of taste; we do not trouble ourselves to inquire whether the author has studied the canons of criticism or has any idea of the conditions which govern the novelist's art. Here is a touching tale, exquisite in its very want of ornament, which rivets our attention from the first word to the last, which has many halting sentences but not a superfluous line. We read it, we enjoy it, we do not want to criticise it. It is nothing to us that in its composition Mrs. Inchbald wove together a couple of novels which she had previously attempted; that she borrowed a hint in doing so from 'The Winter's Tale.' The book is all her own; the fresh outpouring of her brain and heart; and it is a book which he who has once read will never forget.

The heroine, Miss Milner, is young, beautiful, and

lovable; with a strong will which leads her frequently into trouble, but a tender heart that always secures for her a sympathising friend. She is the ward of a Romish priest, named Dorriforth, who is naturally generous and endowed with strong sensibilities, but has trained himself to observe an inflexible standard of duty. The death of a relation opens up his succession to a peerage, and the Pope in consequence dispenses with the vows of the priest. But his acquired asceticism does not desert him; and his admiration of the rare gifts and graces of his ward does not blind him to her thoughtlessness and love of pleasure. He has ample opportunities of observing her faults, for she resides in London, in the same house with him and two Catholic ladies, Mrs. Horton, and her niece, Miss Woodley. He complains of her gaieties, and objects to many of her fashionable visitors, especially to a Lord Frederick Lawnley, the younger son of a duke, a handsome man, and a profligate. He wishes her to favour the addresses of a model suitor, Sir Edward Ashton, the austerity of whose virtues, however, is far from agreeable to Miss Milner.

One morning, as he meets his beautiful but untamed ward upon the staircase, he accosts her:—

"'I hope, Miss Milner, you pass this evening at home?'

"Unprepared for the sudden question, she blushed, and replied, 'Yes'; though she knew she was engaged to a brilliant assembly, for which her milliner had been consulted a whole week. She, however, flattered herself that what she had said might be excused as a mistake, the lapse of memory, or some other trifling fault, when he should know the truth. The truth was earlier divulged than she expected; for just as dinner was removed, her footman delivered a message to her from her milliner, concerning a new dress for the evening—the *present evening* particularly marked. Her guardian looked astonished.

"'I thought, Miss Milner, you gave me your word that you would pass this evening at home?'

"'I mistook; for I had before given my word that I should pass it abroad.'

"'Indeed!' cried he.

"'Yes, indeed; and I believe it is right that I should keep my first promise, is it not?'

"'The promise you gave me, then, you do not think of any consequence?'

"'Yes, certainly, if you do.'

"'I do.'

"'And mean, perhaps, to make it of more consequence than it deserves, by being offended?'

"'Whether or not, I *am* offended—you shall find I am?' And he looked so.

"She caught his piercing eyes—hers were immediately cast down; and she trembled, either with shame or with resentment.

"Mrs. Horton rose from her chair—moved the decanters and fruit round the table—stirred the fire, and came back to her chair again, before another word was uttered. Nor had this good woman's officious labours taken the least from the awkwardness of the silence, which, as soon as the bustle she had contrived was over, returned in its full force.

"At last, Miss Milner, rising with alacrity, was preparing to go out of the room, when Dorriforth raised his voice, and in a tone of authority, said:

"'Miss Milner, you shall not leave the house this evening.'

"'Sir!' she exclaimed, with a kind of doubt of what she had heard; a surprise which fixed her hand on the door she had half-opened, but which now she found herself irresolute whether to open wide in defiance, or to shut submissively. Before she could resolve, he rose from his chair, and said, with a

force and warmth she had never heard him use before:

"'I command you to stay at home this evening.' And he immediately walked out of the apartment by another door."

It will easily be understood that in spite of, or on account of, these bickerings, Miss Milner and Dorriforth fall in love with one another; a result which the latter's tutor and friend, a Jesuit named Sandford, observes with dismay, and endeavours to render nugatory. It is said of him that he knew how to influence the sentiments and sensations of all human kind; but yet he had the forbearance not to "draw all hearts towards him." There were some whose hatred he thought it not unworthy his pious labours to excite; in which he was more successful even than in awakening esteem. It was an enterprise in which he rapidly prospered with Miss Milner. And hardly could it be otherwise when he was continually holding up to her as a pattern and an example a certain Miss Fenton, the *fiancée* of Lord Elmwood, Mr. Dorriforth's cousin, who was a mirror of all the virtues, and not less lovely than virtuous.

At length, Miss Milner consents, in compliance with her guardian's wishes, to retire into the country, where

her behaviour for six weeks is all that can be desired. Then Mr. Sandford, by extolling the excellences of Sir Edward Ashton, vigorously provokes an outburst. She proceeds to encourage the addresses of Lord Frederick Lawnley, though protesting that she will not marry him, and by her wilfulness arousing the anger of Dorriforth and causing the distress of Miss Woodley. Lawnley, unable to reconcile her smiles with her refusal of his hand, not unnaturally attributes it to Dorriforth's intervention. He charges him with monkish hypocrisy, and Dorriforth refrains from reply; but when the young Lord hastily covers Miss Milner's hand with passionate kisses, he loses his self-control, and strikes him. A challenge, of course, follows, which Mr. Dorriforth, a man of honour as well as a priest, does not hesitate to accept. He owes Lord Frederick Lawnley this reparation, and not all the arguments, entreaties, and menaces of Sandford can shake his purpose. Then, in her remorse at the evil she has wrought, and her terror lest the end should be Dorriforth's death, Miss Milner throws herself at his feet, and, as her only means of saving him whom she secretly loves, pretends an affection for Lord Frederick Lawnley, and exacts from Dorriforth a promise that he will not fight him. When left

alone with Miss Woodley she begins to realise the extent of the sacrifice she has made. In reply to an observation of her friend's she exclaims :

"'Do you suppose I love Lord Frederick? Do you suppose I *can* love him? Oh! fly, and prevent my guardian from telling him such an untruth.'

"'What can you mean?' says Miss Woodley, 'I protest you terrify me.'

"'Fly,' she repeats, 'and prevent the inevitable ill consequence which will ensue if Lord Frederick should be told this falsehood. It will involve us all in greater disquiet than we suffer at present.'

"'Then what has influenced you, my dear Miss Milner?'

"'That which impels all my actions—an insurmountable instinct—a fatality that will for ever render me the most miserable of human beings, and yet you, even you, my dear Miss Woodley, will not pity me.'

Miss Woodley presses her in her arms, and vows that while she is unhappy, from whatever cause, she still will pity her.

"'Go to Mr. Dorriforth, then, and prevent him from imposing upon Lord Frederick.'

Miss Woodley rejoins:—

"'But that imposition is the only means of preventing the duel. The moment I have told him that your affection was but counterfeited, he will no longer refuse accepting the challenge.'

"'Then,' she exclaims, 'at all events, I am undone! for the duel is horrible, even beyond everything else.'

"'How so?' inquires Miss Woodley, 'since you have declared that you do not care for my Lord Frederick?'

"'But are you so blind,' returns her friend, 'as to believe I do not care for Dorriforth? Oh, Miss Woodley, I love him with all the passion of a mistress, and with all the tenderness of a wife!'"

Miss Woodley is a Catholic, and this avowal of love for a priest is very shocking to her. She insists that Miss Milner shall remove from Dorriforth's house, and finds a pretext in a visit to a friend. But, torn by her emotions, our heroine falls dangerously ill. On her recovery she learns that Mr. Dorriforth, through his uncle's sudden death, has become Lord Elmwood, and obtained a dispensation from his vows; and, moreover, that he is about to act as a substitute for his deceased cousin and marry Miss Fenton. On

the incidents that follow we have no space to dwell; our eighteenth century novelists were by no means sparing of their invention! Enough to say that Lord Elmwood ascertains from Miss Woodley the secret of Miss Milner's love, and is overpowered with the strength of his passionate joy. He breaks his engagement with the immaculate Miss Fenton, who, to everybody's relief, takes the veil, and avows himself Miss Milner's adorer. The young lady now resumes her waywardness, and tests his devotion by a variety of caprices, until she goes too far. The appearance on the scene of Lord Frederick Lawnley is more than even Elmwood can endure; he addresses to his too charming but tormenting ward a manly letter of farewell, and prepares to visit his estates in the West-Indies.

The parting scene, or what the lovers intend for the parting, is described with infinite grace and tenderness. Lord Elmwood, wrapping himself up in his pride, and intent on the contemplation of his internal anguish, regards Miss Milner's distress with apparent indifference. But it touches the heart of Sandford; her pale face, her tearful eyes, subdue him. When Lord Elmwood has taken Miss Milner's hand, afraid to speak lest he should betray himself, Sandford

steps between them, and exclaims, "Separate this moment, or resolve to be separated only by death." From a book-case he takes down 'The Offices of the Church,' opens at the marriage service, and as they kneel before him, exhorts them to mutual forgiveness. Then he makes them husband and wife. Who cannot imagine Miss Milner's happiness as she looks from the window, and sees the carriage that was to have borne her lover away for ever, driving away empty from the door!

Such is the first part of the story. It concludes with a touch which prepares us for the shadow and gloom of the second part: "Looking on the ring which Lord Elmwood had put upon her finger in haste when he married her, Miss Milner perceived it to be a mourning ring."

Thus gracefully and ingeniously does Mrs. Inchbald glide over the long interval between the two divisions of her story:—

"Not any event throughout life can arrest the reflection of a thoughtful mind more powerfully, or leave so lasting an impression, as that of returning to a place after a few years' absence, and observing an entire alteration in respect to all the persons who

once formed the neighbourhood. To find that many who, but a few years before, were left in their bloom of youth and health, are dead; to find that children left at school are married, and have children of their own; that some, who were left in riches, are reduced to poverty; that others, who were in poverty, have become rich; to find those once renowned for virtue, now detested for vice; roving husbands grown constant; constant husbands become rovers; the firmest friends changed to the most implacable enemies; beauty faded; in a word, every change to demonstrate that

'All
Is transitory on this side the grave.'

"Guided by a wish that the reflecting reader may experience the sensation which an alteration to circumstances like these must excite, he is desired to imagine *seventeen years* elapsed since he has seen or heard of any of those persons who, in the foregoing volume, have been introduced to his acquaintance; and then, supposing himself at the period of those seventeen years, follow the sequel of their history."

The changes which have taken place are startling.

Dorriforth—the pious, the good, the tender Dorriforth—is become a hard-hearted tyrant.

When we remember his gravity of temper and inflexibility of will, we shall see that this is but the natural development of his character, allowing for unfavourable circumstances.

The beautiful, the beloved Miss Milner is no longer beautiful, no longer beloved, no longer—tremble while you read it!—no longer *virtuous*.

Nor is this a forced and artificial change, as the author in the first volume took care to show us Miss Milner's excessive waywardness, her want of fixed principles, and her love of admiration.

Lady Elmwood is now thirty-five. During her husband's absence in the West-Indies, rendered necessary by business, and protracted by illness, she has resumed her acquaintance with Lord Frederick Lawnley, has sought the pleasures of gay society, and has weakly yielded to a dishonourable suit. Awakening [illegible] of her guilt, on hearing of her husband's return home, she flies from his house, leaving behind her a letter in which she supplicates [illegible]. But he sends her child after her, and declares he will never see either of them again. A [illegible] with Lord Frederick Lawnley follows

and the latter is sorely wounded and disfigured by the outraged husband, who, however, remains implacable.

We are carried next to a lonely house near the Scottish Border, where Lady Elmwood is dying. Her daughter, Matilda, the child of sorrow; Miss Woodley, the loyal friend; and Mr. Sandford as gentle towards the unhappy penitent as he was severe towards the wilful beauty, are by her bedside.

"'In the name of God,' says the priest, 'Lady Elmwood, of that God who suffered for you, and, suffering, knew and pitied all our weaknesses,—by Him, who has given His word to take compassion on the sinner's tears, I bid you hope for mercy! by that innocence in which you once lived, be comforted! by the sorrows you have known since your degradation, hope that, in some measure, you have atoned!—by the sincerity that shone upon your youthful face when I joined your hands, and those thousand virtues you have since given proofs of,—trust that you were not born to die the death of the wicked!'"

As he spoke these words of consolation, her trembling hands clasped his; her dying eyes darted a ray of brightness, but her failing voice

endeavoured in vain to articulate; at length, fixing her looks upon her daughter as their last dear object, she was just understood to utter the word "Father."

"'I understand you,' replied Sandford, 'and by all that influence I ever had over him, by my prayers, my tears,' and they flowed as he spoke, 'I will implore him to own his child.'"

She could now only smile in thanks.

"'And if I should fail,' continued he, 'yet, while I live, she shall not want a friend or protector—all an old man like me can answer for.'"—Here his tears interrupted him.

Lady Elmwood was sufficiently sensible of his words and their import, to make a sign as if she wished to embrace him: but finding life leaving her fast, she reserved this last token of love for her daughter; with a struggle she lifted herself from her pillow, clung to her child, and died in her arms.

Sandford betook himself to Lord Elmwood's mansion, and placed in his hands an appeal which his wife, shortly before her death, had written on behalf of their child. "'I do not ask,' she wrote, 'a parent's festive rejoicing at her approach—I do not even ask her father to behold her; but let her live under his

protection. For her grandfather's sake, do not refuse this—to the child of his child, whom he entrusted to your care, do not refuse it.' " And she concluded in words of profound pathos :—

" ' Farewell, Dorriforth ! Farewell, Lord Elmwood ! and before you throw this letter from you with contempt or anger, cast your imagination into the grave where I am lying ! reflect upon all the days of my past life,—the anxious moments I have known, and what has been their end ! Behold *me* also ! In my altered face there is no anxiety, no joy or sorrow ;—all is over ! my whole frame is motionless, my heart beats no more ! ' "

The mother's object is partially attained. Lady Matilda, accompanied by Miss Woodley, is allowed to reside at Elmwood Castle, on condition that she never enters her father's presence, and that neither her name nor her mother's is ever mentioned in his hearing. Any breach of these terms will be punished, in the case of a servant, by dismissal ; in the case of a friend, by loss of friendship. Even to Sandford himself Elmwood says :—" ' I am not to be controlled as formerly ; my temper is changed of late—changed to what it was originally, till your religious precepts reformed it. You may remember how troublesome

it was to conquer my stubborn disposition in my youth; *then*, indeed, you *did*; but in my more advanced age you will find the task too difficult.' "

Lady Matilda and Miss Woodley continue to reside at Elmwood. His Lordship meets with an accident; his leg is almost shattered by a fall from his horse. Judge of the distress of his daughter who would fain hurry to his side, but is not allowed to approach him! He recovers rapidly, and resumes his usual occupations. One day he has been out shooting, and on his return Matilda and he accidentally meet on the staircase.

"She had felt something like affright before she saw him; but her reason told her she had nothing to fear, as her father was away. But now, the appearance of a stranger whom she had never before seen; the authority in his looks, as well as in the sound of his steps; a resemblance to the portrait she had been shown of him; a start of astonishment which he gave on beholding her; but above all her *fears*, confirmed her that it was him. She gave a scream of terror—put out her trembling hands to catch the balustrade for support—missed them—and fell motionless into her father's arms.

"He caught her, as, by the same impulse, he

would have caught any other person falling for want of aid. Yet when he found her in his arms, he still held her there, gazed on her attentively, and once pressed her to his bosom. At length, trying to escape the snare into which he had been led, he was going to leave her on the spot where she fell, when her eyes opened, and she uttered, 'Save me!' Her voice unmanned him. His long-restrained tears now burst forth, and seeing her relapsed into the swoon, he cried out eagerly to recall her. Her name did not, however, come to his recollection—nor any name but this,—'Miss Milner—dear Miss Milner!'"

He recovers himself, however; commands his steward to tear away her hand, which convulsively grasped his coat, and when he is released, hastens to his solitary chamber. He gives immediate orders that his daughter and her companion should leave the Castle. They take up their residence at a farm-house, and the day of Matilda's happiness seems as far distant as ever. And not only Matilda's, but that of her cousin, Henry Rushbrook, the heir-male of Lord Elmwood, who has conceived a passion for the beautiful and unfortunate girl which he dares not avow. It happens, however, that some profligate companions of a Lord Margrave, who is also in love with her, succeed in

breaking into the retired farm-house, and carrying h
off. They are seen and followed by a tenant of Lo
Elmwood's, who makes his way into the dreaded p
sence, and boldly informs the stern nobleman of
child's danger. The father's feelings are sudde
aroused. Turning to Rushbrook, he exclaims, "Wh
are my pistols, Harry?" Sandford, starting from
seat, seizes his hand, and cries out, "Will you th
prove yourself a father?" Lord Elmwood o
answers, 'Yes,' and quits the room.

The *dénouement* will now be clear to every ex
rienced novel-reader. Matilda is rescued; is recen
to her father's heart; Rushbrook confesses his lo
which Matilda reciprocates, and Lord Elmwo
approves; and all goes merry as a marriage bell.

The book is full of truth and power, and could ha
been written only by a woman of genius.

III.

Mrs. Inchbald's industry never flagged. She was always at work; writing original farces, or adapting them from the French with a skill and *verve* which secured a certain amount of originality. In 1793 she produced her very clever comedy, 'Every One has his Fault,' which equally benefited her reputation and her pocket, and would, we think, with a good cast, be as acceptable to Victorian as it proved to Georgian audiences. In 1794 she again essayed the paths of fiction, and gave to the public her second and last novel 'Nature and Art.' The general opinion of critics seems to be that it is inferior to its predecessor; but we confess that we do not share this opinion. We will not speak of its philosophy, which is borrowed from Rousseau, and consists in subordinating the morality of the child of Art to that of the child of Nature; a philosophy more justifiable in those days of imperfect knowledge than it would be now.

We refer to the dramatic conception and admirable working out of the plot, the force and realism of the characters, and the tragic power of the principal scenes. The burden of the story is the startling contrast between the fortunes of William Norwynne and Hannah, the village-girl whom he has betrayed. The former attains wealth, honour, and influence, and rises to the judicial bench; the latter sinks into the lowest depths of degradation, and is at length, on a capital charge, brought up for trial before her seducer. The situation, it must be allowed, is intensely tragical, and Mrs. Inchbald handles it with consummate effect. We can permit ourselves only a brief quotation:—

"Stunned with the enchantment of that well-known tongue directed to her she stood like one just petrified—all vital power was suspended. Again he put the question, and with these additional sentences, tenderly and emphatically delivered:

"'Recollect yourself—have you no witnesses? No proof on your behalf?'

"A dead silence followed these questions.

"He then mildly, but forcibly, added:

"'What have you to say?'

"Here a flood of tears burst from her eyes, which she fixed earnestly upon him, as if pleading for mercy, while she faintly articulated—

"'Nothing, my lord.'

"After a short pause, he asked her, in the same forcible but benevolent tone,—

"'Have you no one to speak for your character?'

"The prisoner answered,—

"'No.'

"A second gush of tears followed this reply, for she called to mind by *whom* her character had first been blasted.

"He summed up the evidence, and every time he was compelled to press hard upon the proofs against her, she shrank, and seemed to stagger with the deadly blow, writhed under the weight of his minute justice, more than from the prospect of a shameful death.

"The jury consulted but a few minutes. The verdict was—

"'Guilty!'

"She heard it with composure. But when William placed the fatal velvet on his head, and rose to pronounce her sentence, she started with a kind of convulsive motion, retreated a step or two

back, and, lifting up her hands with a scream exclaimed,—

"'Oh, not from *you!*'

"The piercing shriek which accompanied these words prevented their being heard by part of the audience; and those who heard them thought little of their meaning, more than that they expressed her fear of dying.

"Serene and dignified, as if no such exclamation had been uttered, William delivered the fatal speech, ending with—

"'Dead, dead, dead!'"

It is probable that this passage was in Lord Lytton's mind when he wrote the scene in his 'Paul Clifford,' in which the latter is tried and sentenced by his unknown father, Sir William Brandon.

It would be of little service to the reader to narrate Mrs. Inchbald's successive removals from street to street in search of cheap and quiet lodgings, no increase of her income abating in the least her passion for frugality. He may be interested, however, to know that the 'Simple Story' was written in a house in Frith Street, Soho, where the successful dramatist occupied a single apartment. Afterwards she betook

herself to a Mr. Shakespear's in Leicester Fields, a few doors to the left of Cranbourne Alley; and here her 'Nature and Art' was composed. In 1803 she removed to Annandale House, at Turnham Green, an establishment principally supported by ladies of the Roman communion. She was driven from it by the ill-temper of the mistress, or superior, a Mrs. Wyatt; and then sought refuge in the house of a Miss Baillie, a milliner in the Strand. Here she occupied an upper story, which, whatever might be its discomforts, afforded her a wide and pleasant prospect.

"My present apartment," she writes, "is so small that I am all over black and blue with thumping my body and limbs against my furniture on every side; but then I have not far to *walk* to reach anything I want; for I can kindle my fire as I lie in bed; and put on my cap as I dine, for the looking-glass is obliged to stand on the same table with my dinner. To be sure, if there was a fire in the night, I must inevitably be burnt, for I am at the top of the house, and so removed from the front part of it that I cannot hear the least sound of anything from the street; *but then*, I have here a great deal of fresh air; more daylight than most people in London, and the *enchanting* view of the

Thames, the Surrey Hills, and of three windmills, often throwing their giant arms about, secure from every attack of the knight of the woful countenance."

In 1820 we find Mrs. Inchbald residing in St. George's Row, in a house rented by a Mr. Clarke, but belonging to a Mr. Este. Her experiences here she shall herself describe (October 1, 1820):—

"Sir Charles [Bunbury] was prophetic; I think he often is so. You have frequently heard me say that, without the least ostentation of knowledge, I never knew a person possess so much. When I was describing to him all the good properties belonging to these my lodgings, I added, 'And I have the Reverend Mr. Este my next-door neighbour.' Sir Charles replied, 'Well, that is a comfort I do not envy you: that *I* call a misfortune.' Now really I did not foresee this, because I knew I should have no acquaintance with him, and because, however ill I may behave in other people's houses, in my *own* I am most particularly inoffensive to all around me. But, unfortunately, Mr. Este is not only my neighbour, but the proprietor of the house I live in; which had been artfully concealed from me till the night before Michaelmas Day, when, between eleven and twelve o'clock, Mr. Este

himself, his son, and one or two more accompanying them, made the most dreadful knocking and calling at our door for Mr. Clarke, the landlord, that I ever heard. I had no doubt the man had committed murder, or some horrid offence, for the maid was vowing from the window that he was not within, though I could hear his voice at the same time *bidding her say so*, and to protest that she would not open the door. To calm my fright, he assured me the persons at the door were only Mr. Este and his friends, who were come to force some paper into the house, which, if he could prevent, he might still keep possession of the house for a longer time than if they succeeded in delivering this written warning. I was astonished at this danger of his being turned out (the very reverse of the predicament in which he assured me he stood with his landlord, and yet it was less frightful than what my fears had before suggested. Again, Mr. Este returned to the attack; and now he, with his own lips, called out—'Where is the woman on the first floor? I can see her' (my shutters had been closed the whole morning), 'and I know who she is. Mrs. Inchbald! Mrs. Inchbald! Mrs. Inchbald!' His voice is remarkably loud; and now a mob was gathered, and a gun placed out of the window of the floor above mine.

I thought I should have died; but now *shame* was predominant over fright. Though the riot ended about twelve, I dared not go to bed; and the next morning the rapper I found was taken off, and the house kept closed till after twelve at noon, when the paper was of no more avail to give warning; and we have been quiet mostly since."

Mrs. Inchbald's later compositions included the play of 'Lovers' Vows,' adapted from the German of Kotzebue, and an original comedy, 'To Marry or not to Marry,' which achieved a permanent success. Her literary reputation had widened greatly her circle of acquaintance; she visited, or was visited by, the Duchess of Devonshire, the Abercorns, Lady Milner and Lady Mountcashel; she was on intimate terms with Godwin, the Edgeworths, Mrs. Opie, Mrs. Barbauld, and Mrs. Radcliffe. To the last she preserved her economical habits; but her charities towards her relatives and friends were unfailing. As she advanced in years she withdrew from society, and gave herself up entirely to her studies. Her life, on the whole a happy and an honoured one, almost reached the Psalmist's span. She was in her 80th year, when on the 1st of August, 1821, she passed away after a very

brief illness. The admirer of genius will find her grave in old Kensington churchyard, by the side of the monument which Canning raised to the memory of his only and beloved son.

THE COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON.

A.D. 1790–1849.

I.

MARGUERITE, Countess of Blessington, once so famous in London Society, though now little more than the shadow of a name, was the third child and second daughter of an obscure Irish squire, one Edmund Power, of Knockbrit, near Clonmel, in the county of Tipperary. She was born on the 1st of September, 1790. Her mother, of the name of Sheehy, is described as a plain uncultivated woman without pretensions to wit or beauty; so that we must suppose the daughter to have inherited her gifts and graces from her father's family. The squire was certainly a handsome man, and throughout Tipperary was known as "Beau Power." He was also a reckless man, of the old but happily exploded type of Irish landlords; living profusely on a small income, devoting his days to hunting, and his nights

king. The influences which surrounded Mar-
's childhood were, therefore, as unfavourable
ld well be imagined. A pale and weakly child,
n intellect much too keen and quick for the
ody, she was regarded as surely doomed to a
ure grave; and no one thought it necessary or
while to develop the mental powers that everybody
d. She was left almost entirely to herself.
o sisters, who afterwards became respectively
ntess Canterbury and the Comtesse de St.
ult, were not wanting in affection, but they did
derstand her. So she lived in a world of her
s children so often do—a world of dreams and
; perpetually puzzling her young mind with
ations which no one comprehended, and questions
no one was prepared to answer. Happily she fell
h a friend of her mother's, a Miss Dwyer, who
seem to have been no ordinary woman. She
iated the talents of the solitary imaginative child,
ddressed herself to the task of cultivating them.
ield was sufficiently rich to repay the labour
ed upon it. Marguerite became known as a
use; at first for the exclusive benefit of her
rs and sisters, but afterwards, when her parents
arned to admire her graceful inventions, she was

called upon to repeat them for the entertainment of their friends and neighbours.

The necessity of providing for the education of their children induced the Powers, about 1800, to remove to Clonmel; and here Marguerite's health greatly improved, and she found herself able to join in the usual games of childhood. The removal was a disastrous event, however, for the fortunes of the family. Mr. Power had accepted a seat on the bench of country magistrates. In this position, though a Roman Catholic, he set to work with much vigour to hunt down the proscribed rebels of the '98. Entering into a kind of alliance with the Irish Government, he started a newspaper, the *Clonmel Gazette*; and having in this double capacity acquired considerable unpopularity, and wasted the remains of his fortune, he purchased a partnership in a Waterford firm of merchants in the hope of retrieving his losses. This measure met with the want of success that might have been anticipated, and Mr. Power's difficulties were [illegible] all remedy.

His effect upon his temper was unpleasant for his family, but they did not moderate his love of company or his [illegible] for riotous living. Clonmel was a garrison town, and the garrison supplied a succession of

ome guests. Among them came in 1804 two
rs of the 47th, who were both struck by the budding
iness of Marguerite. The attentions of Captain
ray the young beauty received with pleasure;
: of Captain Farmer instinctively awakened
repulsion. The latter was not slow to perceive
fact, but with great coolness betook himself to
ather, making an offer of his hand, with the most
al proposals a large fortune enabled him to frame.
nwhile, Captain Murray declared his love to
guerite herself, informing her of the course
ted by his brother officer. The poor child—she
not fifteen—was overwhelmed by the intelligence;
o far as she knew her heart, her affections were
n to Murray; and she had an instinctive dread
'armer's violence of temper and abruptness of
ner. But she soon found that her parents had
tioned his addresses, and that she was not at
ty to reject them. The embarrassed father
rly grasped at an alliance so advantageous, in a
dly sense, for one of his children; and Mar-
ite knew that it was hopeless to appeal to a man
m debt and drink had rendered ungovernable.
did she meet with any sympathy from her
ner. She was not asked to love Captain Farmer

but only to marry him; and in spite of her tears and prayers the marriage took place some time in the course of 1805.

Such a marriage could have but one result—unhappiness. Marguerite had not been long under her husband's roof when she found reason to believe that he was subject to fits of insanity. She lived with him about three months, and during this brief period frequently suffered personal violence at his hands; he was wont to strike her on the face, to pinch her until her arms were black and blue; when he went abroad he locked her up, and frequently left her without food until she was nearly starved. At length he was ordered to join his regiment, then encamped on the Curragh of Kildare. His wife seized the opportunity to regain her liberty; she refused to accompany him, and eventually was permitted to return to her father's house. Captain Farmer, soon after resuming his military duties, quarrelled with a superior officer, and drew his sword upon him. To avoid a court-martial, he sold his commission and quitted the service. His friends then induced him to go to India; but his wife resisted all proposals to follow him.

She soon discovered, however, that her presence was

not agreeable to her parents, and her high spirit taking umbrage at their coldness, she left them, and sought shelter with an aunt. The next few years of her life were spent in wandering to and fro. In 1807 she was living at Cahir; in 1809, at Dublin. A few months later she was secluded in Hampshire. A veil of obscurity hangs over this period of her career. When it is lifted, we find her residing with her brother Robert in a house in Manchester Square, London. This was in 1816. Notwithstanding, we are told, the troublous scenes through which she had passed, she had bloomed out into a brilliantly beautiful woman; and here in London, in some way or other, she gained immediate access to a tolerably distinguished circle, and became at once the observed of all observers. Among those who admired her personal and intellectual charms was Charles John Gardiner, Earl of Blessington. The death of Captain Farmer, which took place in 1817,—he was killed by falling from a window in the King's Bench Prison, in a fit of drunken madness,—enabled the earl to declare his admiration, and on the 16th of February, 1818, Mrs. Farmer became the Countess of Blessington. She had been scarcely four months a widow; the Earl scarcely

four years a widower.* He was in his 36th year: the lady in her 28th. Of the Earl it may be said that, with some vices and many grave failings, he had not a few virtues. He was generous to a fault and of an amiable temper. For literature and arts he had a refined taste and moderate capacity. He was a shrewd observer, and had read much and seen much. Unhappily his experience of life had not been of a kind to strengthen his judgment or elevate his ethical standard. He knew nothing of that law of duty by which the Christian mind seeks to regulate its actions. As for the Countess, she, too, was of refined tastes, with a love for the *belles lettres*, with conversational gifts of no mean order, and those showy talents which in a beautiful woman an eulogistic world is pleased to call genius. She had the warm impetuous nature of her countrymen; a kind heart and a ready hand; but she had never been taught, and she never learned, to look upon life as having its responsibilities and its opportunities. To surround herself with things fair to look upon; to attract the homage of society; to

* His first wife was a widow, "Mary Campbell, widow of Major Browne." At the time of his second marriage he had one daughter living.

wing the hours with elegant pastimes; to fancy herself a woman of letters; to amuse and be amused,—these were her objects. There was nothing solid in her, no mental power, no calm judgment, no delicate perception of right and wrong. She was a butterfly of Society, enjoying the sunshine of summer, and sparkling very brightly in it; but with no resources in herself when the blight of winter came. That she was capable of better things may be surmised from occasional passages in her works; but somehow or other circumstances were against her, or, more correctly speaking, she was not resolute enough to shape circumstances in the proper way. The superficial brilliancy of a part of her career must not blind us to its real shabbiness. Whether as Mrs. Farmer, or as the wife of the Earl of Blessington, or as the "friend" of Count D'Orsay,—whether in the reckless profusion of her father's house, or the splendid elegance of Seamore Place and Gore House, or the last poor attempts at refinement in her Parisian retreat, she never knew that peace, that purity, and that satisfied affection which are implied in the word *Home*. For a home she never had: she lived in and for the world, and the world behaved to her as it behaves to all who become its slaves.

There can be no doubt that she was a fascinating woman. Her personal gifts were unquestionably of no common order. Her form was full, but exquisitely proportioned, and in her every movement was a spontaneous grace. The great charm of her countenance lay in its wonderful variety of expression. "The instant a joyous thought took possession of her fancy, you saw it transmitted, as if by electrical agency, to her glowing features; you read it in her sparkling eyes, her laughing lips, her cheerful looks; you heard it in her ringing laugh, clear and sweet as the gay joy-bell sounds of childhood's merriest tones." This is in Madden's finest style, but it embodies a truth which everybody acknowledged. It was "the mind, the music breathing o'er her face,"—the potency of her glance and smile, the tone of her voice, the grace of her gestures, the vivacity of her manner;—it was the combination of all these which made up the magic of her influence. Yet when in her presence you could not attempt to define to yourself the nature of the spell which had overtaken you. It was enough that you saw this comely, gracious, enchanting woman in all the ripeness of her thirty summers, and seeing, admired. Any prejudice you had conceived against her vanished in the sunshine of her loveliness. Not here

the cold perfection of a marble statue; not hers the faultlessness of feature and figure which distinguished the famous Gunnings; not hers the imperious beauty of a Castlemaine; but to brightness of eye, and glow of complexion, and grace of outline, she added a vivacity and an *espièglerie* that were all her own. How much was natural, how much was artificial, it is hard to say; and no one when in her company cared to inquire. "Her dazzlingly clear complexion, dark hair, and rich dark eyebrows and lashes, delicate features, ever radiant with the light of her mirthful nature, small mouth and thin pink lips curling with playful irony, small white hands, tiny feet, and incomparable shape, were the theme of universal admiration, not less than her frank, generous, and cordial manner, —Irish in its heartiness, French in its piquancy, and English in its delicacy and refinement; and her rich soft voice, which, alike in laughter and in speech, enlivened its hearers with a sense of new-found happiness. But what most elicited enthusiastic praise was the perfect harmony of her entire appearance in rest and action. The emotion of the moment was as manifest in her step, her form, her slightest alteration of attitude, as in her countenance. She was young and triumphant, gentle, and of a constitution naturally

mirthful these were her halcyon days: every mo
brought with it a fresh joy, and the delight she
rienced, manifested in the strangely subtle langu
her beauty, was itself the quality with which, b
all her other charms, she swayed the affection
imaginations of her astonished and almost incred
admirers." She was, of course, an actress; a
every beautiful woman is; but her art was so co
mate that even the closest observer could seldom
it. And if this must in truth be said, yet it wo
unjust not to own that she had at least an act
ready sympathy, contempt for the purely convent
and generosity of feeling.

Poetical tributes laid at the feet of such a w
as the Countess of Blessington must not be take
literally. The language of compliment perm
certain amount of exaggeration. On the other
if they were wholly unfounded, if they selecte
praise qualities that did not exist, they would b
the bitterest of affronts and the keenest of s
Only to an acknowledged beauty, and a que
Society, could Landor have ventured to address
lines as these:—

Quonam carmine te alloquar decenter
Vero nomine dicta Margarita !
Sermo est durior Anglicanus : atqui
Tuscus displicet : est enim vigoris
Expers : aptior est quidem Latinus ;
Atque non satis est mihi tibique,
Te sermo Atticus unice deceret.

Which he thus translated :—

What language, let me think, is meet
For you, well called the Marguerite.
The Tuscan has too weak a tone,
Too rough and rigid is our own ;
The Latin—no—it will not do,
The Attic is alone for you.

Here are two stanzas, eminently characteristic of Landor's polished but frigid verse, which occur in one of his letters to Lady Blessington, and appear to have been suggested by a sentence of her own,—"I have not forgotten your favourite old ballad : will you hear it ?"

Come, sprinkle me that music on the breast,
Bring me the varied colours into light
That now obscurely on its marble rest ;
Show me its flowers and figures fresh and bright.

Waked at thy voice and touch, again the chords
Restore what envious years had moved away;
Restore the glowing cheeks, the tender words,
Youth's vernal noon and Pleasure's summer day

Byron also, as is well known, burnt incense at t
fair lady's shrine. The following verses were writt
at Genoa, and are in that jog-trot metre which remi
us of Shenstone and his pastoral inanities. As a
d'occasion they may pass, but a great poet sho
hardly condescend to anything so trivial :—

You have asked for a verse.—the request
In a rhymer 'twere strange to deny;
But my Hippocrene was but my breast,
And my feelings (its fountain) are dry

Were I now as I was, I had sung
What Lawrence had painted so well;
But the strain would expire on my tongue,
And the theme is too soft for my shell

I am ashes where once I was fire,
And the bard in my bosom is dead;
What I loved I now merely admire,
And my heart is as grey as my head.

My life is not dated by years—
  There are moments which act as a plough ;
And there is not a furrow appears
  But is deep in my soul as my brow.

Let the young and the brilliant aspire
  To sing what I gaze on in vain ;
For sorrow has torn from my lyre
  The string which was worthy the strain.

These puerile conceits, embodied in language the st artificial, with a metrical form which is deficient ke in grace and strength, are surely unworthy of the thor of 'Manfred.' They elicited from Lady Blessgton a reply which is at least equal in merit, though e last stanza is a fair example of the bathos :—

When I asked for a verse, pray believe
  'Twas not vanity urged the desire ;
For no more can my mirror deceive,
  No more can I poets inspire.

Time has touched with rude fingers my brow,
  And the roses have fled from my cheek ;
And it surely were folly if now
  I the praise due to beauty should seek.

And as pilgrims who visit the shrine
  Of some saint, bear a relic away,
I sought a memorial of thine
  As a treasure, when distant I stray

Oh! say not that lyre is unstrung,
  Whose chords can such rapture bestow,
Or that mute is that magical tongue
  From which music and poetry flow.

And though sorrow, ere youth yet has fled,
  May have altered thy locks' jetty hue;
The rays that encircle thy head
  Hide the ravaging marks from our view

Our quotations are premature in order of time, but it may be convenient to bring together here a few of the lyrical courtesies paid by distinguished men to this Queen of Society during the course of her brilliant reign. Trifles light as air, they seldom possess any intrinsic value, but they show both the nature of the homage that was laid at her feet and the wide range of the circle she drew around her. Mere personal charms could not have exercised so great and so enduring an influence.

To James Smith, one of the authors of 'Rejected

lresses,' is due a graceful if somewhat far-fetched
:y :—

> The Bird of Paradise, that flies
> O'er blest Arabia's plains,
> Devoid of feet, forbears to rise,
> And where she rests, remains.
>
> Like her of footing reft, I fain
> Would seek your blest dominions,
> And there, content till death, remain,
> But, ah! I lack the pinions.

ı poetical compliment, we suppose, it is allowable
orget one's natural history!

'ery few persons nowadays read the writings of
P. Willis, though his prose and verse are con-
rable in quantity, and some forty years ago were in
ıt demand. There is cleverness in both, but only
erness. The sparkle is forced, the wit artificial,
sentiment insincere. Since the epoch of the popu-
ty of 'Pencillings by the Way,' a school of writers
arisen of which America has good reason to be
ıd; and so long as Emerson and Hawthorn, Lowell,
ndell Holmes, and Longfellow are remembered, N.
Villis may well be forgotten. His 'Lines' to Lady

Blessington, written in 1840, are a very fair specimen of his average poetical productions :—

> The music of the waken'd lyre
> Lies not within the quivering strings,
> Nor burn'd alone the minstrel's fire
> Upon the lip that trembling sings ;
> Nor shines the moon in Heaven unseen,
> Nor shuts the flower its fragrant cells,
> Nor sleeps the fountain's wealth I ween
> For ever in its sparry wells ;
> The charms of the enchanter lie,
> Not in his own lone heart—his own rapt ear and eye

Here we have the poetaster's recognised stock-in-trade ; eyes and trembling lips, moons, flowers, fountains and sparry wells ; and these well-known articles appear and reappear in all Mr. N. P. Willis's poetical compositions.

> I gaze upon a face as fair
> As ever made a lip of Heaven
> Faster and its music prayer ;
> The first lit star of summer even
> Springs near me so softly on the eye,
> Nor grows with watching half so bright,
> Nor [illegible] its sisters of the sky,

So seems of heaven the dearest light.
Then murmur where that shape is seen,
"Thy youth's angelic dream was of that form and mien."

Yet, though we deem the stars are blest,
And envy in our grief the flower
That bears but sweetness in its breast,
And praise the enchanter for his power,
And love the minstrel for the spell
He winds from out his lyre so well;

The starlight doth the wanderer bless,
The lyre the listener's tears beguile,
And, lady, in the loveliness
Doth light to-day that radiant smile,
A lamp is lit in Beauty's eye,
That souls, else lost on earth, remember angels by!

By way of contrast we quote some lines written by Thomas Moore, in 1834, though it must be admitted that these are not in the Irish poet's better style:—

What shall I sing thee? Shall I tell
Of that bright hour, remembered well
As though it shone but yesterday—
When, as I loitered in the ray
Of the warm sun, I heard o'erhead

Thy name, as by some spirit, said,
And looking up, saw two bright eyes
Above me from a casement shine—

Dazzling the heart with such surprise
As they, who sail beyond the line,
Feel, when new stars above them rise!
And it was thine, the voice that spoke,
Like Ariel's, in the blue air then;
And thine the eyes whose lustre broke,
Never to be forgot again!

What shall I sing thee? Shall I weave
A song of that sweet summer eve
(Summer, of which the sunniest part
Was that which each had in the heart)
When thou, and I, and one like thee
In life and beauty, to the sound
Of our own breathless minstrelsy,
[illegible] the sunlight faded round,
[illegible] the whole ideal hall
[illegible] gay, and all!

But the reader will weary of these specimens of the [illegible] which poets and men of ability can [illegible] for the sake of a smile from a fascinating woman. The cleverest thing which Madden preserves

in his heterogeneous volumes was written *for*, rather than *to*, the Countess of Blessington by the humourist and dramatist, George Colman. But the humour, like the sentiment of the era of the regency, is at the present day somewhat *fade* and uninteresting. The interval between Colman and H. J. Byron is sufficiently wide, — wider still between Colman and Douglas Jerrold or even Albert Smith. Our grandfathers would seem to have laughed or wept on equally small provocation :—

How have I sworn—and sworn so deep,
No more to put my friends to sleep,
  By writing crambo for 'em !
Rhymes my amusement once I made,
When Youth and Folly gave me aid,
But since they have become *my trade*,
  I must, of course, abhor 'em.

Entirely generous Mr. Thrale,
Who sold brown stout and haply ale,
  Was always fond of giving,
Of whom Sam Johnson said one day,
"Thrale would give anything away
Rather than porter, I dare say,
  By which he makes his living !"

Yet the illusion holds not here—
Mine is but Poetry's small beer,
  And every line will show it :
Thrale brewed more potent stuff, I ween,
From Thames than I from Hippocrene
So there's no parallel between
  The Brewer and the Poet

Still, why again be scribbling? List!
There is a Pair I *can't* resist,
  'Tis now no drudging duty,
The *Blessingtons* demand my strain,
And who records against the grain
His sparkling converse and champagne,
  And her more sparkling beauty?

But hold! I fear my prudence sleeps
Her Ladyship an Album keeps,
  Whose leaves, though I ne'er spied 'em,
Are graced with verse from wits profest,
Bards by Apollo highly blest,
No doubt they've done their very best,
  How shall I look beside 'em?

Dare I, in lame and silly pride,
Hobble where Rogers loves to glide,
  Whose sweetly simple measure
Make enviers of Genius mad,

Delight the moral, soothe the sad,
Give *Human life* a zest, and add
  To *Memory's* greatest *Pleasures*.

Or, if I venture, cheek by jowl,
With the Anacreontic soul,
  That master, to a little,
Of elegant erotic lore,
Then they, who *my* weak page explore,
Will reckon me much less than More,
  Not half so Great as Little.*

Well, well, no matter, still I feel
My talent's dearth supplied by zeal;
  Away thou base dejection!
This scrawl, whate'er its want of wit,
If Lady Blessington thinks fit,
So very much to honour it,
  May rest in her collection.

From 1818 to 1822 Lady Blessington and her husband lived in London, holding high revelry in the Earl's town-house, St. James's Square. Under her

* Need we remind the reader that Moore published his translations from Anacreon, and his earlier poems, under the name of Little?

direction it became the rival of Holland House, somewhat more Bohemian in character than the latter, perhaps, with a freer and more genial atmosphere; but attracting all who were celebrated, or wished to be considered celebrated, or thought they ought to be celebrated in arts and letters, in politics and society. Nearly everybody who was worth knowing was to be met there: the versatile Canning, the accomplished Lansdowne; Castlereagh, clever and composed; Lord Palmerston, then better known as a dandy than a politician, but whose half-concealed powers were properly appreciated by the few; Sir Francis Burdett, not as yet the people's hero; Lord John Russell, just beginning to rise into importance; Scarlett, most persuasive of advocates, and Jekyll, readiest of epigrammatists; Curran, the Irish orator; and Erskine, the witty Scottish lawyer. And with these mingled actors, musicians, poets, scholars, — Moore, singing his own songs with a charm of expression that owed nothing to his sweetly feeble voice; Lawrence, who painted the portraits of his contemporaries with a meretricious grace; Wilkie, crowned with the fame of his pathetic pictures of domestic history; Mathews, ablest of mimics and most genial of comedians; Kemble, who seemed born to play the heroes of genteel

comedy; Rogers, meditating an epigram which should immortalise the weakness of his dearest friend; Dr. Parr, with wig almost as tremendous as his erudition; Luttrell, always ready and fluent; and many others whose names are already beginning to fade from the dusty record. They furnished the "materials" of a sufficiently successful entertainment; but to blend them and harmonize them was a task which few could have accomplished so gracefully and easily as the Countess of Blessington. Night after night her drawing-rooms were crowded; night after night occurred the quiet collision of quick minds, and the thrusts and parries of rapid wits; and night after night each guest went away with the conviction that the enjoyment he had tasted was due, not to himself or to the eminent men with whom he had come in contact, but to his charming and amiable hostess. The conversations on these occasions embraced a wide range of subjects—from grave to gay, from lively to severe—dealt with social themes or grave matters of statesmanship; discussed the last new book, the last new play, the last new picture; revolved round a famous statesman, or diverged to the scandal of the hour; but the Countess was always equal to the demand made upon her,

could bandy repartee with the gay, or exchange reflections with the grave. It might almost be said of her as Johnson said of Goldsmith, that she touched nothing which she did not adorn; at least such was the feeling of her guests, for who could criticise the sentiment or analyse the jest that was accompanied by a flash from the dazzling eyes, and a smile that had all the glow and warmth of summer sunshine?

It must not be forgotten that among the visitors to St. James's Square, about the beginning of 1822, were the Count de Grammont (afterward Duc de Guiche), and his brother-in-law, a young Frenchman of great personal attraction, prepossessing manners, and varied accomplishments, who, as the Count d'Orsay —Byron's "Cupidon déchainé"—was afterwards to play a conspicuous part in the later scenes of Lady Blessington's career.

II.

In 1822 Lord and Lady Blessington, weary of the pleasures of London Society, set out on a continental tour, with the intention of residing for some years in the south of Europe. They were accompanied by Lady Blessington's youngest sister, Miss Mary Ann Power, and by Charles James Mathews, the now celebrated comedian, and veteran of the stage, then a young man about twenty years, intended for the profession of an architect. Lord Blessington, a man very capable of generous impulses, had offered his father to take charge of "young Mathews," and furnish him with every facility for pursuing his studies in Italy. The offer was gratefully accepted, and for upwards of two years he remained with the Blessingtons, proving, through his humour, accomplishments, and versatility, a welcome addition to their party. "A merrier man," says Dr. Madden, "within the limits of becoming mirth, it would be difficult to

find. He was an admirable mimic, had a marvellous facility in catching peculiarities of manners, picking up the different dialects of the several parts of Italy he passed through. But with all his comic talent, love of fun and frolic, ludicrous fancies, and overflowing gaiety of heart, he never ceased to be a gentleman, and to act and feel like one."

In Paris the Blessingtons met with Baron Denon, one of the *savants* who had shared in Napoleon's Egyptian expedition. Lady Blessington describes him as a compound of *savant* and *petit maître*, who seemed equally at home when discoursing on pyramids and sphinxes, criticising the *joli chapeau* of a fashionable beauty, descanting on the perfections of a nunnery or indicating the elegant contour of a well-turned ankle.

Passing on to Switzerland, the Blessingtons visited the famous haunts and houses of poets and philosophers on the shores of the Lake of Geneva and the "crystal Leman,"—the places associated with the memories of Rousseau and Gibbon, Madame de Staël, Byron, and Shelley. In 1823 the party crossed the frontiers of Italy, and at Albano Lady Blessington made the acquaintance of Byron. It is curious to read their impressions of one another, as communicated by

the Lady to the public, and by the Poet to his friend Moore.

The high expectations of the Lady do not seem to have been realised. She declares (in her 'Idler in Italy') that never again will she allow herself to form an ideal of any person she desires to see; as the inevitable result is disappointment. Though Byron had more than usual personal attractions, he fell short of the imaginary portrait she had drawn. His laugh was musical; true, but he rarely indulged in it, and when he did, it was quickly followed by a graver aspect, as if he were ashamed of his momentary exhibition of hilarity. If asked to point out his prominent defect of manner, she was disposed to reply that it was "a flippancy" unworthy of the author of 'Childe Harold' and 'Manfred,' and a want of self-possession and dignity, unbecoming in a man of birth and genius.

On the other hand, Byron writes to Moore:—

"Your other allies, whom I have found very agreeable persons, are Milor Blessington and *épouse*, travelling with a very handsome companion, in the shape of a 'French Count' (to use Farquhar's phrase in the 'Beaux' Stratagem'), who has all the air of a Cupidon déchaîné, and is one of the few specimens

I have seen of our ideal of a Frenchman *before* the Revolution, an old friend with a new face, upon whose like I never thought that we should look again. Miladi seems highly literary, to which, and your honour's acquaintance with the family, I attribute the pleasure of having seen them. She is also very pretty, even in the morning,—a species of beauty on which the sun of Italy does not shine so frequently as the chandelier. Certainly, English women wear better than their continental neighbours of the same sex. Mountjoy (Lord Blessington's second title) seems very good-natured, but is much tamed since I recollect him in all the glory of gems and snuff-boxes, and uniform and theatricals, and speeches in our house—'I mean of peers.'—I must refer you to Pope, whom you don't read, and won't appreciate—for that quotation (which you must allow to be poetical), and sitting to Stroelling, the painter, to be depicted as one of the heroes of Agincourt, 'with his long sword, saddle, bridle, whack fal de,' etc. etc."

From Byron's allusion to D'Orsay, we find that he made one of the Blessingtons' party. According to the Countess, they and the poet were on the most cordial terms during their residence at Genoa; and

she even hints that her smiles temporarily charmed away much of his misanthropy. On the other hand, the Countess of Guiccioli informed Madden that he did not pay more than five visits in all to the Countess, and we can well believe that he limited her opportunities for making a book about him. D'Orsay he liked from the first as clever, original, and unpretending, and he sat to the accomplished Count for his portrait.

The intimacy, whether as close as the one Countess affirmed, or as scant as the other asserted, is admitted by Moore to have exercised a genial influence upon the mind of Byron. And he ascribes to Lady Blessington a very important service,—the revival to some extent of the poet's old regard for his wife, and the amendment from a moral point of view of the later cantos of 'Don Juan.' On one occasion he was speaking to the Countess of his daughter Ada: "Her mother," he said, "has feasted on the smiles of her infancy and growth, but the tears of her maturity shall be mine." Lady Blessington happily observed that if he loved his child so deeply, he ought never to write a line that would bring the blush of sorrow to her cheek, or the tear of shame to her eye. "You are right," exclaimed Byron;

"I never recollected this. I am jealously tenacious of the undivided sympathy of my daughter; and that work 'Don Juan', written to beguile hours of *tristesse* and wretchedness, is well calculated to loosen my hold on her affections. I will write no more of it.—would that I had never written a line."

While in this gentler mood, says Moore, with old loves and old memories, and the tenderest of human sympathies, all tending to soothe his pride and mitigate his anger against Lady Byron, he was informed that a near friend of her Ladyship was in Geneva, and he requested Lady Blessington to procure for him, through this friend, his wife's portrait. He had been informed that Lady Byron feared he was about to return to England for the purpose of claiming his daughter. In requesting the portrait and refuting the report, he wrote to Lady Blessington :—

"My request would be for a copy of the miniature of Lady B., which I have seen in possession of the late Lady Noel, as I have no picture, or indeed memorial of any kind of Lady B., as all her letters were in her own possession before I left England—and we have had no correspondence since—at least on her part. My message with regard to the infant implies to this effect, that in the event of any [illegible] to the mother, and my remaining

the survivor, it would be my wish to have her plans carried into effect, both with regard to the education of the child, and the person or persons under whose care Lady B. might be desirous that she should be placed. It is not my intention to interfere with her in any way on the subject during her life; and I presume that it would be some consolation to her to know (if she is in ill health, as I am given to understand), that in *no* case would anything be done, as far as I am concerned, but in strict conformity with Lady B.'s own wishes and intentions—left in what manner she thought proper."

When Lord Blessington expressed his intention of leaving Genoa, Byron urged him to prolong his stay, and to take a residence adjoining his own, named "Il Paradiso." A report got abroad that he intended to take the place for himself; whereupon it was cynically observed that the Devil was once more about to enter Paradise ("Il diavolo è ancora entrato in Paradiso"). The remark suggested to Byron the following lines:—

Beneath Blessington's eyes
The reclaimed Paradise
Should be free as the former from evil;
But if the new Eve
For an apple should grieve,
What mortal would not play the devil?

The allusion to the new Eve is thus explained. Lord Byron had announced that he was going to a masked ball, and invited Lady Blessington to accompany him. Some light jests passing to and fro in reference to the character she should assume, it was indecorously proposed that she should go as Eve. Byron immediately rejoined, "And as some one must play the devil, I will do it." He made but a sorry sort of devil after all. There was not much of the Mephistopheles in Byron's nature; though there was pride, and vanity, and affected contempt of the world, and a good deal of constitutional recklessness.

In the early part of June, 1823, the Blessingtons left Genoa, and we have it upon Moore's evidence that Byron was much affected by their departure. On the preceding evening he sat conversing for some time. He was evidently in low spirits, and after expressing his regret that they should leave Genoa before his time of sailing, proceeded to speak of his own intended voyage in a despondent tone. "Here," said he, "we are all now together—but—when, and where, shall we meet again? I have a sort of boding that we see each other for the last time; as something tells me I shall never again return from Greece." After continuing in this melancholy strain for some

time longer, he leaned his head on the arm of the couch where they were sitting, and, bursting into tears, wept for some minutes in a paroxysm of emotion. Though his conversation had been solely directed to Lady Blessington, all who were present took notice of, and were affected by, this apparently genuine display of feeling; while he himself, ashamed of his weakness, endeavoured to divert attention from it by an ironical remark, spoken with a kind of hysterical laugh, upon the effects of nervousness. Previous to this scene, he had presented to each member of the party some little gift; to one a book, to another a print from his bust by Bartolini, and to Lady Blessington a copy of his Armenian Grammar, with manuscript remarks of his own on the leaves. On parting with her he solicited, as a memorial, some trifle which she had worn, and received one of her rings; in return, he took a pin from his breast, containing a small cameo of Napoleon, which, he said, had long been his companion, and presented it to the Countess. Next day the latter received from him the following characteristic note:—

"*Albano, June* 2, 1823.

"My dear Lady Blessington,

"I am *superstitious*, and have recollected that

memorials with a *point* are of less fortunate augury. I will, therefore, request you to accept, instead of the *pin*, the enclosed chain, which is of so slight a value that you need not hesitate. As you wished for something *worn*, I can only say that it has been worn oftener and longer than the other. It is of Venetian manufacture, and the only peculiarity about it is, that it could only be obtained at or from Venice. At Genoa, they have none of the same kind. I also enclose a ring, which I would wish *Alfred* to keep; it is too large to *wear*; but it is formed of *lava*, and so far adapted to the fire of his years and character. You will perhaps have the goodness to acknowledge the receipt of this note, and send back the pin (for good luck's sake), which I shall value much more, for having been a night in your custody.

"Ever faithfully your obliged, etc.

"P.S. I hope your *nerves* are well to-day, and will continue to flourish."

From Genoa the Blessingtons proceeded, by way of Leghorn and Rome, to historic Naples, where they quartered themselves in the Gran Bretagna hotel, facing that enchanted Bay, which from all time poets have celebrated in their song, and painters sought to perpetuate on their canvas. The bright joyous scenery,

the glowing sunshine, the warm luminous air,—who has not heard of the charms of the classic Parthenope? . . .

"Where the Baian ocean
Welters, with air-like motion,
Within, above, around its bowers of starry green,
Moving the sea-flowers in those purple caves,
Even as the ever stormless atmosphere
Floats o'er the Elysian realm." . . .

The impression which they produced on the mind of Lady Blessington, a mind keenly susceptible to the beautiful in form and colour, is recorded in one of her most graceful sketches, 'The Bay of Naples,' which appeared in the 'Book of Beauty' for 1834. As it is short enough for quotation, we give it as a specimen of her better style:—

"It is evening, and scarcely a breeze ruffles the calm bosom of the beautiful bay, which resembles a vast lake, reflecting on its glassy surface the bright sky above, and the thousand stars with which it is studded. Naples, with its white colonnades seen amidst the dark foliage of its terraced gardens, rises like an amphitheatre: lights stream from the windows, and fall on the sea beneath like columns of gold. The

castle of St. Elmo crowinng the centre; Vesuvius, like a sleeping giant in grim repose, whose awakening all dread, is to the left, and on the right are the vine-crowned heights of the beautiful Vomero, with their palaces and villas peeping forth from the groves that surround them; while rising above it the convent of Camaldori lifts its head to the skies. Resina, Portici, Castellamare, and the lovely shores of Sorrento, reach out from Vesuvius as if they tried to embrace the Isle of Capri, which forms the central object; and Pausilipo and Misenum, which, in the distance, seemed joined to Procida and Ischia, advance to meet the beautiful island on the right. The air, as it leaves the shore, is laden with fragrance from the orange-trees and jasmine, so abundant round Naples, and the soft music of the guitar, or lively sound of the tambourine, marking the brisk movements of the tarantella, steals on the ear.

"But, hark! a rich stream of music, silencing all other, is heard, and a golden barge advances; the oars keep time to the music, and each stroke of them sends forth a silvery light; numerous lamps, attached to the boat, give it at a little distance the appearance of a vast shell of topaz, floating on a sea of sapphire. Nearer and nearer draws this splendid pageant; the

music falls more distinctly on the charmed ear, and one sees that its dulcet sounds are produced by a band of glittering musicians, clothed in royal liveries. This illuminated barge is followed by another, with silken canopy overhead, blue curtains drawn back to admit the balmy air. Cleopatra, when she sailed down the Cydnus, boasted not a more beautiful vessel; and, as it glides over the sea, it seems impelled by the music that precedes it, so perfectly does it keep time to its enchanting sounds, leaving a bright trace behind, like the memory of departed happiness. But who is he that guides this beauteous bark? His tall and slight figure is curved, and his snowy locks, falling over ruddy cheeks, show that age has bent, but not broken him; he looks like one born to command—a hoary Neptune, steering over his native element;—all eyes are fixed, but his follow the glittering barge that precedes him. And who is she that has the seat of honour at his side? Her fair, large, and unmeaning face wears a placid smile; and those light-blue eyes and fair ringlets speak her of another land; her lips, too, want the fine chiselling which marks those of the sunny clime of Italy; and the expression of her countenance has in it more of earth than heaven. Innumerable boats filled with lords and ladies follow, but

intrude not on the privacy of this royal bark, which passes before us like a vision in a dream. He who steered was Ferdinand, King of the Sicilies,* and she who was beside him, Maria Louisa, ex-Empress of France."

In July, 1828, the Blessingtons rented the Villa Belvedere, on the Vomero, a mansion, in itself and in its surroundings, well-fitted to receive a Queen of Beauty. The windows of the principal salons opened upon a terrace-garden, surrounded on three sides by a marble balustrade, and on the fourth enclosed by a noble gallery, filled with choice works of art. The roof of this gallery, which was of considerable length, formed a massy terrace; and at its extreme end rose a pavilion, with open arcades, and floor of marble. Ah, what a glorious prospect was commanded by the pavilion!—the gleaming bay, with the green shores of Tasso's Sorrento on the left; the beautiful island of Capri in the centre, like an emerald set in sapphire, with Nisida, Procida and its heroic memoirs, Ischia, the home of Vittoria Colonna, and the wooded promontory of Misenum to the right; fragrant gardens

* Afterwards widely known as "King Bomba."

and purple vineyards filling up the foreground. The rich odours that rose from the masses of bud and blossom in the grounds around the pavilion, and the shimmer of the Spanish jasmine and tuberose that garlanded its walls, rendered it a delightful retreat. To the daughter of the Irish squire it must have seemed like a dream out of fairyland; though in all such scenes she moved composed and self-possessed as if to the manner born.

Yet we are disposed to believe, with her biographer, that never did an English lady of refined taste enjoy the beauties of Naples, or visit the memorable places in its neighbourhood, under happier auspices than Lady Blessington.

Her personal charms, her grace of manner, her lively and intelligent conversation, and her repute for literary culture drew around her a crowd of notabilities, all eager to place themselves at her disposal. Under the escort of Sir William Gell, who so strangely combined the characters of a virtuoso and a man of the world, who played with equal facility the parts of the learned antiquary and the courtly chamberlain of Queen Caroline, she visited the buried cities of Campania, the Cities of the Dead, Pompeii and Herculaneum. To Pæstum, and its roses and its temples, where—

"In solemn beauty, through the clear blue light,
The Doric columns rear their awful height."

she was escorted by the late Earl of Carlisle, an accomplished nobleman, who had the poet's taste though not the poet's power of expression. To the Museums and Galleries of Naples, with all their treasures of ancient and modern art, she was accompanied by Millingen the antiquarian, Unwins the painter, or Richard Westmacott the sculptor. If she went to the Observatory, to survey "the motion of the heavens," she was attended by Piazzi or Sir John Herschel. Happy the pupil who was favoured with such instructors.

The visit to Pompeii was commemorated by some smooth stanzas, of which the following are given as specimens:—

"Lonely [illegible] of the dead!
[illegible] where the soul has fled,
[illegible] upon thy face
[illegible] and pensive grace
[illegible] dead display,
[illegible] stamped upon frail clay,
[illegible] the impress of the mind
That the fragile earth refined."

Here we catch a very distinct reminiscence of a passage in Byron's 'Giaour,' with which every reader is familiar.

> "Farewell, city of the dead!
> O'er whom centuries have fled,
> Leaving on your buried face
> Not one mark Time loves to trace!
> Dumb as Egypt corpses, you
> Strangely meet our anxious view,
> Showing to the eager gaze
> But cold still shades of ancient days."

Of course Lady Blessington ascended Vesuvius. For an account of her enterprise, however, the reader must be referred to her 'Idler in Italy.'

In 1826 and 1827 we find the Blessingtons at Florence, still extending their circle of distinguished acquaintances, and gathering around them the men and women most famous for their sayings or doings, and their wit, fashion, or accomplishments. Here, for example, they visited or were visited by the Prince Borghese, remarkable for his Falstaffian proportions and as the husband of Napoleon's beautiful sister, Pauline; Francis Hare, afterwards one of the authors

of 'Guesses at Truth'; Lamartine, the French poet and statesman, and Walter Savage Landor. The last-named has recorded some particulars of his introduction to the charming Countess:—

"Residing in the Palazzo Medici at Florence, the quinsey, my annual visitant for fifty seasons, confined me to my room. At that time my old friend, Francis Hare, who had been at Pisa on a visit to Lord and Lady Blessington, said at breakfast that he must return instantly to Florence. Lord and Lady B. joked with him on so sudden a move, and insisted on knowing the true reason for it. When he mentioned my name and my sickness, Lord Blessington said, 'You don't mean Walter Landor?' 'The very man,' replied Hare. His Lordship rang the bell, and ordered his horses to be put instantly to his carriage. He had gone to Pisa for his health, and had rented a house on a term of six months, of which only four had expired. The next morning my servant entered my inner drawing-room, where I was lying on a sofa, and announced Lord Blessington. I said I knew no such person. He immediately entered, and said, 'Come, come, Landor! I never thought you would refuse to see an old friend. If you don't know Blessington, you may remember Mountjoy.' Twenty

years before, when Lord Mountjoy was under the tuition of Dr. Randolph, he was always at the parties of Lady Belmore, at whose house I visited, more particularly when there were few besides her own family. I should not have remembered Lord Mountjoy. In those days he was somewhat fat for so young a man; he had now become emaciated. In a few days he brought his lady 'to see me and make me well again.' They remained at Florence all that year, and nearly all the next. In the spring, and until the end of autumn, I went every evening from my villa, and spent it in their society. Among the celebrities I met there was Pocris, and, for several weeks, the Count di Camaldoli, who had been Prime Minister of Naples, the Duke de Richelieu too, and D'Orsay's sister, the Duchess de Guiche, besides a few of the distinguished Florentines. When I returned to England, soon after Lord Blessington's death, my first visit was to the Countess. Never was man treated with more cordiality. Her parties contained more of remarkable personages than ever were assembled in any other house, excepting, perhaps, Madame de Staël's."

At Florence, on the 1st of December, 1827, took

place the marriage of Count D'Orsay with Lord Blessington's daughter by his first marriage, the Lady Harriet Frances Gardiner, then a child of little more than fifteen years old. A child in physique and appearance and a child in manners, who ought to have been kept for another year or two under the charge of wise and thoughtful tutors. Afterwards she developed into a woman of great beauty and intelligence; but at the time of her marriage she was greatly more immature than is common with most healthy English girls of fifteen. Lord Blessington had decided upon the match, in which his daughter's inclinations were wholly unconsidered, as far back as April, 1823, when, at Genoa, he received the news of the death of his only son and heir, Lord Mountjoy. His motives it is impossible to guess at, unless we believe with Dr. Madden, that "he was labouring under a particular kind of insanity, manifested by an infatuation and interiority of mind in his conduct with respect to his family affairs, though quite sane on every other subject—which unfitted him to dispose of his children at that juncture." But Lady Blessington's influence over him was very great; and why did she not interfere to protect her step-daughter? As for the bridegroom, Count D'Orsay, who received

o,000, as the marriage-portion, his conduct seems to to have been utterly unworthy of a gentleman and nan of honour. He cared nothing for his girl-wife, d speedily separated from her, though continuing to e with the Blessingtons, and afterwards holding at can only be called an equivocal position towards wife's step-mother! The utter selfishness of the unt's character, his want of principle, and his orance of or disregard for the laws of Christian rality, must not be forgotten in the admiration cited by the variety of his accomplishments and rsonal gifts. It is impossible to excuse any one of parties concerned in this shameful affair, which ew a shadow over a young girl's life, and was blushingly cynical in its extraordinary baseness. e father—the step-mother—the bridegroom; each s equally guilty, and each equally merits the ralist's sternest condemnation.

In June, 1828, the Blessingtons arrived in Paris, d took up their quarters in the mansion of the réchal Ney, which they proceeded to redecorate d refurnish on a scale of unexampled splendour. wing no taste for upholstery we decline to dwell the details; but we may quote Lady Blessington's

description of her bedroom and boudoir, which were fitted up, unknown to her, under the direction of her husband :—

"The whole fitting up," she says, "is in exquisite taste; and, as usual, when my most gallant of all gallant husbands that it ever fell to the happy lot of woman to possess, interferes, no expense has been spared. The bed, which is silvered instead of gilt, rests on the backs of two large silver swans, so exquisitely sculptured that every feather is in alto-relievo, and looks as fleecy as those of the living bird. The recess in which it is placed is lined with white-fluted silk, bordered with blue-embossed lace, and from the columns that support the frieze of the recess, pale blue silk curtains, lined with white, are hung, which, when drawn, conceal the recess altogether. . . .

"A silvered sofa has been made, to fit the side of the room opposite the fire-place, near to which stands a most inviting *bergère*. An *escritoire* occupies one panel, a book-stand the other, and a rich coffer for [illegible] forms a pendant to a similar one for lace or [illegible]. A carpet of uncut pile, of a pale [illegible], a silver lamp, and a Psyche glass; the cornices, silvered, to correspond with the decorations

of the chamber, complete the furniture. The hangings of the dressing-room are of blue silk, covered with lace, and trimmed with rich frills of the same material, as are also the dressing-stands and *chaise longue*, and the carpet and lamp are similar to those of the bed. A toilette-table stands before the window, and small *jardinières* are placed in front of each panel of looking-glass, but so low, as not to impede a full view of the person dressing, in this beautiful little sanctuary. The *salle de bain* is draped with white muslin, trimmed with lace; and the sofa and the *bergère* are covered with the same. The bath is of marble, inserted in the floor, with which its surface is level. On the ceiling over is a painting of Flora, scattering flowers with one hand, while from the other is suspended an alabaster lamp, in the form of a lotus. . . . The effect of the whole is chastely beautiful, and a queen could desire nothing better for her own private apartments."

The Blessingtons now plunged into a world of fashionable gaiety, and the Hôtel Ney became the head-quarters of all that was brightest and most illustrious in Parisian society. But this butterfly existence was destined to an abrupt and melancholy termination. On the 23rd of May, 1829, Lord

Blessington died suddenly of a fit of apoplexy, and the Countess was left a widow with a jointure of £2000 a year, secured upon estates which the late Earl's extravagance had seriously encumbered.

This chapter will fitly conclude with a letter addressed to the widowed Countess by Walter Savage Landor :—

"Too well was I aware how great my pain must be in reading your letter. So many hopes are thrown away from us by this cruel and unexpected blow. I cannot part with the one of which the greatness and the justness of your grief almost deprives me, that you will recover your health and spirits. If they could return at once, or very soon, you would be unworthy of that love which the kindest and best of human beings lavished on you. Longer life was not necessary for him to estimate your affection for him and those graces of soul which your beauty in its brightest day but faintly shadowed. He told me that you were requisite to his happiness, and that he could not live without you. Suppose then he had survived you, his departure in that case could not have been so easy as it was, unconscious of pain, of giving it, or leaving it behind. I am comforted at the

reflection that so gentle a heart received no affliction from the anguish and despair of those beloved. You have often brought me over to your opinion after an obstinate rather than a powerful contest; let me, now I am more in the right, bring you over by degrees to mine."

III.

In November, 1830, Lady Blessington, with the Count and Countess D'Orsay, returned to London. Soon afterwards, a formal separation was arranged between the Count and Lady Harriet; and the former, in consideration of a sum of £100,000, payable in certain instalments, surrendered the claim to the Blessington estates, which the late Earl's will had given him. Lady Blessington, finding it impossible to maintain on a suitable scale the splendid mansion in St. James's Square, which her husband had bequeathed to her, disposed of her interest in it, and rented a house in Seamore Place, furnishing it with great taste and splendour. Here she took up her residence in 1831, Count D'Orsay living in Curzon Street, near at hand. Throwing open her salons nightly, she soon became a centre of attraction for the c[illegible] of fashion, and the notabilities of literature and art; [illegible]d rivalled,

as a social *entrepreneuse*, Lady Cork, Lady Charleville, and even the imperious hostess of Holland House.

In Crabb Robinson's 'Diary' we find some passages descriptive of Lady Blessington and her *réunions*. Thus, under date of September 28th, 1832, we read :—

"Between nine and ten, I went by Landor's desire to Lady Blessington's, to whom he had named me. She is a charming and very remarkable person; and though I am by no means certain that I have formed a lasting acquaintance, yet my two interviews have left a delightful impression. Lady Blessington is much more handsome than Countess Egleffstein, but their countenance, manners, and particularly the tone of voice, belong to the same class. Her dress rich, and her library most splendid. Her book about Lord Byron* (now publishing by driblets in the *New Monthly Magazine*), and her other writings, give her in addition the character of a *bel esprit*. Landor, too, says that she was to Lord Blessington the most devoted wife he ever knew. He says, also, that she was by far the most beautiful woman he ever saw,

* 'Conversations with Lord Byron,' afterwards published in one volume.

"She is no longer *dans sa première jeunesse.* Still she looks something on the sunny side of thirty. Her person is full, but preserves all the fineness of an admirable shape; her foot is not pressed in a satin slipper, for which a Cinderella might long be sought in vain; and her complexion (an unusually fair skin, with very dark hair and eyebrows) is of even a girlish delicacy and freshness. Her dress, of blue satin (if I am describing her like a milliner, it is because I have here and there a reader in my eye who will be amused by it), was cut low, and folded across her bosom, in a way to show to advantage the round and sculptured-like curve and whiteness of a pair of exquisite shoulders; while her hair, dressed close to her head, and parted simply on her forehead with a rich *feronier* of turquoise, enveloped in clear outline a head with which it would be difficult to find fault. Her features are regular, and her mouth, the most expressive of them, has a ripe fulness and freedom of play peculiar to the Irish physiognomy, and expressive of the most unsuspicious good humour. Add to all this, a voice merry and sad by turns, but always musical, and manners of the most unpretending elegance, yet even more remarkable for their winning kindness, and you have the prominent traits

of one of the most lovely and fascinating women I have ever seen."

Willis proceeds to speak of the celebrities whom he met at Seamore Place. There was James Smith, the author, or rather part author, of those most admirable of parodies, the 'Rejected Addresses.' His brother, the novelist, whose 'Brambletye House' is still remembered as a fairly successful historical romance, writes, that "in the wide circle of his London acquaintances, one of the houses at which he most delighted to visit was that of Lady Blessington. To this lady he was in the habit of sending occasional epigrams, and complimentary or punning notes. For example, when the lady removed from Seamore Place to Gore House, Kensington, he wrote:—

Notes to Correspondents.

You who erst, in festive legions,
Sought in May Fair, Seamore Place,
Her eforth in more westward regions
Seek its ornament and grace

Would you see *more* taste and splendour,
Mark the notice I rehearse
Now at Kensington attend her
Further on, you *may fare* worse

There was also Sir Henry Bulwer, the diplomatist, afterwards Lord Dalling, "a small man; very slight and gentleman-like; a little pitted with the small-pox, and of very winning and persuasive manners." A frequent visitor was his more celebrated brother, the late Lord Lytton, who, as poet and dramatist and novelist, was so often near supreme excellence, and yet never attained it. He was in the flush of his early fame, and everywhere sought as the author of 'Pelham'; somewhat of a dandy, but always a gentleman and a scholar.

To Seamore House, as afterwards to Gore House, came the present Prime Minister of England, then young Mr. D'Israeli, gay and airy, the glass of fashion, and as the author of 'Vivian Grey,' the observed of all observers. "Patent leather pumps, a white stick, with a black cord and tassel, and a quantity of chains about his neck and pockets—lividly pale—his eye black as Erebus, with the most mocking and lying-in-wait sort of expression conceivable. His hair as extraordinary as his taste in waistcoats. A thick heavy mass of jet black ringlets falling over his left cheek almost to his collarless stock; and on the right parted and put away with the smooth carefulness of a girl's; and shining most unctuously 'with thy

incomparable oil, Macassar.'" Such was Lord Beaconsfield in 1834; since then, many things have happened.

Thomas Moore was often a guest, and Willis gives an interesting account of one of his appearances as a singer. "We went up to coffee," he says, "and Moore brightened up again over his *chasse-café*, and went glittering on with criticisms on Grisi, the delicious songstress now ravishing the world, whom he placed above all but Pasta; and whom he thought, with the exception that her legs were too short [illegible], an incomparable creature. This introduced music very naturally, and with a great deal of difficulty he was taken to the piano. My letter is getting long, and I have no time to describe his singing. It is well known, however, that its effect is only equalled by the beauty of his own words; and, for one, I could have taken him into my heart with my delight. He makes no attempt at music. It is a kind of admirable recitative, in which every shade of thought is syllabled and dwelt upon, and the sentiment of the song goes through your blood, warming you to the very eyelids, and melting your tears, if you have a soul to receive it in you. I have heard of women fainting at a song of Moore's, and if the burden of it answered

by chance to a secret in the bosom of the listener, I should think, from its comparative effect upon so old a stager as myself, that the heart would break with it. We all sat round the piano, and after two or three songs of Lady Blessington's choice, he rambled over the keys awhile, and sang, 'When first I met thee,' with a pathos that beggars description. When the last word had faltered out, he rose and took Lady Blessington's hand, said 'Good-night,' and was gone before a word was uttered."

Meantime Lady Blessington had entered on a literary career with the view of augmenting an income which was insufficient to meet all the expenses of her elegant establishment. As early as 1822 she had given to the world a little book, flimsy but clever, entitled 'The Magic Lantern; or, Sketches of Scenes in the Metropolis.' This was followed in the same year by another *volumelet* of 'Sketches and Fragments,' the character of which may be inferred from its contents:—'Blighted Hopes—Marriage—The Ring—Journal of a Week of a Lady of Fashion—An Allegory—Fastidiousness of Taste—Coquetry—Egotism—Reflections—Sensibility—Friendship—Wentward Fragments.' The sentiments expressed are conventional, and the expression is conventional, except where it is

hyperbolical and artificial. There is much more talent displayed in her 'Journal of Conversations with Lord Byron,' published in 1832. The narrative flows on in a simple and unexaggerated style, and it is evident from various shrewd hints and acute observations that the writer had formed a very just opinion of Lord Byron's character. Dr. Madden hints at the existence of a secret feeling of pique,—and this may have prevented her from being blinded to the faults of the man by the fame of the poet.

Lady Blessington's first novel was 'Grace Cassidy, or the Repealers,' issued in 1833. As the title indicates, the scenes and persons are Irish, and the tone is semi-political. It has long since sunk into well-merited oblivion; and we know not that copies are anywhere procurable except in the great public libraries. We [illegible] very plainly that the reader will gain nothing by [illegible] through the three ill-printed volumes, [illegible] [illegible] thinks through each [illegible] [illegible] with a wide expanse of margin on either side. [illegible] Blessington has attempted to give the book a [illegible] by the introduction of living notabilities [illegible] Mr. Shiel, "Mr. Thiel," and Earl [illegible] "Lord Reg[illegible]"; but there are no traces [illegible] The characters are merely lay figures

labelled at will by the author, but otherwise wholly unrecognisable.

'Meredyth,' in three volumes, was published in the same year as 'Grace Cassidy,' on which it shows a slight improvement. The publisher records that only 380 copies were sold. Lady Blessington wrote too quickly to write well; for in 1835 she produced three novels, 'The Follies of Fashion,' 'The Two Friends,' and 'The Victims of Society.' In the last she evidently delivers herself of the anger, and the passion of humiliation, excited by the treatment she was receiving at the hands of the *beau monde*. Her brilliant assemblies, it is to be noted, were attended by men only. This is hardly to be wondered at when we consider that the Count D'Orsay was by this time established under her roof as the *ami de la maison*. It is true that he was ten or twelve years younger than Lady Blessington, but she was still a Beauty, and as N. P. Willis has told us, preserved a wonderfully youthful appearance. That Society was scandalised is, therefore, no matter for astonishment. Undoubtedly, Lady Blessington keenly felt her isolation, and her feelings will explain the bitterness of tone perceptible in almost every page of 'The Victims of Society.' For the rest, it is a commonplace novel enough, which

owed the amount of attention it received to no intrinsic merit, but to the title and fashionable reputation of its author. Lady Blessington had no talent for novel-writing. She could not frame an interesting plot; she had no idea of constructing situations; she was unable to conceive any distinct and individual characters. The heroes and heroines of her stories are as lifeless and as unlike life as the models in a cheap tailor's window. She had no imagination and no passion. She succeeded best, though even then her success was only partial, when she described those aspects of "good society" with which she had for many years been acquainted. Such descriptions suited her light and fluent style, and gained a certain amount of freshness from the way in which they elicited her sense of humour.

To Gore House, Kensington Gore, formerly the residence of William Wilberforce, Lady Blessington removed in the spring of 1836; and here she held her receptions on a larger scale than had been possible at Seamore Place. For upwards of twelve years it continued to be the rendezvous where the visitor was sure of meeting with the lions of the day, whether of home-growth or imported from abroad, whether men

of the sword or of the pen, whether diplomatists versed in the intrigues of courts, or philosophers practised in the "oppositions of science." Let us quote again from Crabb Robinson :—

"Reached Lady Blessington's after ten. With her were D'Orsay, Dr. Lardner, Trelawney, Edward Bulwer. A stranger, whose conversation interested and pleased me, I found to be young Disraeli. He talked with spirit of German literature."

"At half-past seven, went to Lady Blessington's, where I dined. The amusing man of the party was a young Irishman—Lover—a miniature painter and an author. He sang and accompanied himself, and told some Irish tales with admirable effect. One of King O'Toole and one of an Irish piper. In both, exquisite absurdities, uttered in a quiet tone, and yet dramatically, constituted the charm. Among the other guests were Chorley [the novelist and musical critic] and the American Willis. Count D'Orsay, of course, did the honours."

A frequent guest at Gore House was the Prince Louis Napoleon (afterwards Napoleon III.), sallow-complexioned, with drooping eyelids and long pointed moustaches and furtive glance,—always ready to listen, and always reticent in his own speech. In Lady

Blessington and the Count he found devoted friends, who never wearied in their efforts on his behalf, and exerted for him all their social and political influence.

The expenses of Gore House, and the selfish extravagances of Count D'Orsay, compelled Lady Blessington to enrol herself among professional *littérateurs*, and to drive bargains with booksellers as eagerly and as closely as any "slave of the lamp." She contributed largely to the 'Annuals' which were then so popular, and for several years she edited the 'Book of Beauty.' Lady Wilde remarks that the whole system of these illustrated year-books was a speculation based on personal vanity. Court-beauties—and some who were not Court-beauties—paid for having their portraits engraved in the unnatural and sickly-sentimental style then in vogue, and the editor afterwards ordered prose or verse to suit the portraits. The wives and mothers of the upper classes having been exhausted, a raid was made upon the children; more extravagant portraits and more prose and verse. A variation was occasionally introduced; a landscape engraved from some popular picture, or a group of figures, and this was accompanied by a tale or a topographical sketch. The contributors were generally the friends of the editor.

who in this manner repaid her for her hospitality and helped to swell her income. It cannot be said that their work was often worthy of them. Yet among them we find such names as those of Lytton Bulwer, the late Lord Strangford, the late Earl of Carlisle, Sir Aubrey de Vere, Judge Talfourd, Landor, James Smith, Barry Cornwall, Disraeli, Captain Marryatt, and Mrs. S. C. Hall. The kind of poetry furnished by the titled editress herself may be inferred from the following specimen. It is entitled 'Félicité,' and intended to illustrate a drawing by Maclise in which a *femme de chambre*, with an evident air of satisfaction, is "trying on" a handsome dress before a looking-glass :—

"Oh! would I were a lady
In costly silks to shine;
Who then could stand beside me?
What figure match with mine?

"Who'd rave about my mistress
With her pale and languid face,
If they could see *my* pink cheeks,
Edged round with Brussels lace?

"How well her cap becomes me!
With what a jaunty air
I've placed it off my forehead,
To show my shining hair!

"And I declare these ribands
Just suit me to a shade;
If Mr. John could see me,
My fortune would be made

"Nay, look! her bracelets fit me,
Though just the least too tight;
To wear what cost so much, must
Afford one great delight.

"And then this pretty apron,
So bowed and frilled and laced,
I hate it on my mistress,
Though well it shows my waist.

"I must run down one minute,
That Mr. John may see
How silks and lace and ribands
Set off a girl like me

"Yet all of these together,
Ay, pearls and diamonds too,
Would fail to make most ladies look
As well as I know who"

These verses, it must be confessed, are below the average even of 'Book of Beauty' and 'Keepsake' literature. Still, the aim was always so low, and the

sentiment so vapid, that one cannot but be surprised at the comparatively long reign of the Annuals, and at the feeble digestive powers of the public for whom such light viands were prepared.

Resuming our sketch of Lady Blessington's literary career, we note that in 1838 she published her best work of fiction, 'The Confessions of an Elderly Lady,' —"Confessions" were at that time very popular, as the reader will perceive if he glances at an old catalogue of a circulating library of "the period;"—in 1839. 'The Governess'; and in the same year her 'Idler in Italy,' decidedly her most finished literary work. Here she was upon safe ground; she had only to relate and describe, not to invent; and she was able to enliven her pages with anecdotes that invested them with a certain freshness of interest. Its success induced her to publish in 1841 her 'Idler in France.' This, to some extent, brings her into rivalry with Lady Morgan, whose superiority of talent, however, was incontestable. 'The Lottery of Life' appeared in 1842. Next came 'Strathern, or Life at Home and Abroad.' It was first issued as a weekly *feuilleton* in the *Sunday Times;* and if we mistake not, the proprietors had good reason to desire its speedy conclusion. Afterwards it was published by Colburn in four volumes. As the

result of the double publication, Lady Blessington realized about £600; but the publishers lost seriously. The public did not care for her ladyship's novels. However, she continued to publish, and, through her social influence, to find publishers, though she never achieved even a moderate success. In 1846 appeared the 'Memoirs of a Femme de Chambre,' which seems to us to show both a moral and intellectual deterioration on the part of the writer. And the same deterioration is evident in 'Lionel Deerhurst; or, Fashionable Life under the Regency' (1846), and 'Marmaduke Herbert, or, The Fatal Error' (1847). Her last novel, 'Country Quarters,' ran through successive issues of a London weekly journal in 1848, but we have never read it.

The *Edinburgh Review*, in 1838, thus spoke of the best of her works of fiction:—

"Modern society, which is not very rich in materials for the stage, produces the exact varieties of life most favourable to the genius of the novelist. The comic dramatist requires strong contrasts and marked effects; and the wider the distinctions between ranks and classes, the deeper the divisions that circumstances draw between man and man, the better for the purposes of the stage. The novelist, on the

contrary, more subtle, analytic, and refining than the dramatist, inclining rather to delicate fidelity, to minute details, than to bold exaggeration of vehement contrasts, finds scope for his art precisely where society appears most level and uniform; and in proportion to the apparent similarity of the general flock is the skill and beauty with which individualities are discovered and enforced.

"The novels of Lady Blessington are strongly characterised by the social phenomena of the times—they are peculiarly the *Romans de Société* — the characters that move and breathe throughout them are the actual persons of the great world, and the reflections with which they abound belong to the philosophy of one who has well examined the existing manners. In her writing there has been a marked and progressive improvement, as if by the self-study that belongs to application, powers previously unknown to herself had been gradually developed.

"The 'Confessions of an Elderly Lady,' and 'Confessions of an Elderly Gentleman,' are more popular in their nature than 'The Victims of Society,' and more sparkling in their execution. They contain much shrewd but quiet satire, and much subtlety of observation; while here and there, in the midst of

their most lively irony, there are charming touches of reflective morality and unconscious pathos."

This eulogium, we will not call it criticism, must surely have been written by an *habitué* of Gore House. We admit that the 'Confessions' are Lady Blessington's best work in the department of fiction, but the "subtlety of observation," and the "touches of pathos" exist only in the Reviewer's imagination.

Instead of making any quotations from these novels, which would necessarily suffer by being torn from their context, we prefer to give as specimens of Lady Blessington's reflective style some extracts from the best of the 'Waifs and Strays of Thought,' collected by Dr. Madden from her Common-Place Books. These, doubtless, were jotted down for use in future literary efforts. The reader will perceive that they vary greatly in merit:—

"[illegible] in the mine, Talent is the [illegible] it out."

[illegible] simile, if intended to illustrate [illegible] Talent and Genius, [illegible] the [illegible] appropriates the labours [illegible]

"It is less difficult, we are told by Brissot, for a woman to obtain celebrity by her genius, than to be pardoned for it."

"It is doubtful whether we derive much advantage from a constant intercourse with superior minds. If our own be of equal calibre, the contact is likely to excite the mind into action, and original thoughts are often struck out; but if any inferiority exists, the inferior mind is quelled by the superior, or loses whatever originality it might have possessed, by unconsciously adopting the opinions and thoughts of the superior intelligence."

"Half the reputations for wit that pass current in fashionable life, are based on ill-natured sayings of persons who would have found it difficult to have obtained any notice in society, except by censorious observations; they are of the class of whom mention is made in the French verse—

'S'il n'eut mal parlé de personne
On n'eut jamais parlé de lui.'"

"Borrowed thoughts, like borrowed money, only show the poverty of the borrower."

"A woman should not paint sentiment till she has

ceased to inspire it." [From a French source, evidently.]

"Memory seldom fails, when its office is to show us the tombs of our buried hopes."

"A woman's head is always influenced by her heart, but a man's heart is always influenced by his head." [Is not this more antithetical than true?]

"Some good qualities are not unfrequently created by the belief of their existence, for men are generally anxious to justify the good opinion entertained of them."

"Great men direct the events of their times—wise men take advantage of them—weak men are borne down by them."

"A young woman ought, like an angel, to pardon the faults she cannot comprehend; and an elderly woman, like a saint, because she has endured trials."

"People are seldom tired of the world till the world is tired of them." [A variation, if we mistake not, of one of La Rochefoucauld's maxims.]

"We make temples of our hearts, in which we worship an idol, until we discover the object of our love was a false god; and then when it falls, it is not

the idol only that is destroyed—the shrine is ruined." [Suggested by a passage in one of Lord Lytton's earlier essays, entitled, we think, 'On Infidelity in Love.']

"Sheil describes one of our statesmen as a man who united the maximum of coldness with the minimum of light; 'he was an iceberg with a farthing rush-light on the summit.'"

"We are never so severe in dealing with the sins of others, as when we are no longer capable of committing them ourselves."

"Sceptics, like dolphins, change when dying."

"We render ourselves the ministers [instruments?] of the fatality which our weakness imagines."

THE FLOWER TO THE STARS.

"Despise us not, we are the stars of earth,
And tho' we homage pay to ye on high,
Lifting our fragile heads to view your brightness,
Are ye not forced to let your shining eyes
Dwell on us denizens of the favoured earth?
Formed by the same Almighty Cause of all,
Ye look down on us, from your azure fields,
And we from *ours of green* look up to you."

Decidedly Lady Blessington's *forte* was not blank verse!

> And thou art gone from earth, like some fair dream,
> Beheld in slumber, leaving nought behind
> But memory, to tell that thou hast been;
> And there for evermore shall be enshrined
>
> As ships that sail upon the boundless deep,
> Yet leave no trace; or onwards in their flight,
> As birds which cleave the blue and ambient air,
> Leave no impress and soon are lost to sight
>
> So those who to eternity do pass,
> Like shadows disappear, and nought remains
> To tell us they have been but aching hearts
> And pulsed truths which memory retains

"My heart is like a frozen fountain, over which the ice is too hard to allow of the stream beneath flowing with vigour, though enough of vitality remains to make the *chilling rampart* that divides its waters from light and air insupportable."

"The first heavy affliction that falls on us rends the veil and lets us see all its darkness."

Compare with Young *Night Thoughts*, which seem

to have been a favourite book of Lady Blessington's)*—

> Affliction is the good man's shining scene :
> Prosperity conceals his brightest ray ;
> As night to stars, ever lustre gives to man.]

"Fatality is another name for misconduct."

"Desperate is the grief of him whom prosperity has hardened, and who feels the first arrow of affliction strike at his heart, through the life of an object dearest to him on earth."

"Religion converts despair which destroys, into resignation which submits."

"How many errors do we confess to our Creator, which we dare not discover to the most fallible of our fellow-creatures!"

"The separation of death is less terrible than the moral divorce of two hearts which have loved, but have ceased to sympathise, with memory recalling what they once were to each other."

These are fair specimens of the sentiments and

* It is characteristic of Lady Blessington's poetical taste that we find no reference in any of her works to Keats, Shelley, Coleridge, or Wordsworth.

reflections which Lady Blessington scatters throughout her novels. They are not very striking or original, they are not without faults of taste, and they are not always true. But they are evidently the product of a quick and ready mind, sharpened by contact with the world, and educated by a wide and long experience.

IV.

DY BLESSINGTON's literary career was not, as we have n, a successful one. At the outset, indeed, while her me and reputation as a leader of fashion attracted, and the heyday of prosperity of the Annuals, she made an ome of £2000 a year; but this rapidly declined, as public grew weary of 'Keepsakes,' 'Books of auty,' and discovered that a woman might be a Beauty," and a "Queen of Society," and yet write a y poor novel. Unfortunately, contemporaneous h the decrease of her income from her pen was the rease of her income from the Blessington estates. ese suffered severely from the effects of the Irish tato-famine, and the Countess's jointure, therefore, s very irregularly paid and often largely in arrear. anwhile, the expenses of her establishment did diminish, and the selfish extravagance of Count Orsay knew no limit. In the social circle the poor y maintained her usual liveliness of manner and

brightness of countenance, but she was sick at hea and torn with a thousand anxieties. When the *Da News* was started, she accepted the post of purveyor Fashionable Intelligence to its columns at a salary £800 a year; but dissatisfaction soon sprang up c both sides, and after a six months' trial she cancel the engagement. In other ways she strove to a ment her resources, but in vain. It is only just to s that no small portion of her expenditure was due the annuities she allowed to members of her famil and her charities were as numerous as they we unostentatious.

At length, the crash came. Count D'Orsay, to avo arrest, was compelled to escape to Paris. Immed ately afterwards, in the spring of 1849, the Countess creditors, having become aware of her precario position, began a simultaneous pressure. An exec tion for £[illegible] on account of a bill for silk, lace, a the like, was put into Gore House. "Some arrang ments were made, a life insurance was effected, b it became necessary to determine on a sale of th whole of the effects for the interest of all the creditor Several of the friends of Lady Blessington urged on h pecuniary assistance, which would have prevented th necessity of breaking up the establishment. But sh

declined all offers of this kind. The fact was, that Lady Blessington was sick at heart, worn down with cares and anxieties, wearied out with difficulties and embarrassments daily augmenting, worried with incessant claims, and tired to death with demands she could not meet. For years previously, if the truth were known, she was sick at the heart's core of the splendid misery of her position—of the false appearances of enjoyment in it—of the hollow smiles by which it was surrounded—of the struggle for celebrity in that vortex of fashionable life and luxury in which she had been plunged, whirling round and round in a species of continuous delicious excitement, sensible of the madness of remaining in the glare and turmoil of such an existence, and yet unable to stir hand or foot to extricate herself from its obvious dangers and distresses."

The sale at Gore House will probably be remembered by many of our readers. It was a nine days' wonder, and attracted a large assemblage of the idlers of London. The amount realised, about £12,000, paid Lady Blessington's debts, and left her comparatively free from pecuniary embarrassment. Afterwards, in the year of the Great Exhibition, Gore House was taken and fitted up by the

celebrated *chef*, M. Soyer, and in one of Mr. G. A. Sala's papers will be found a lively account of its new decorations and remodelled interior. "Soyer's Symposium," however, proved an utter failure.

On the 14th of April, 1849, Lady Blessington, accompanied by her two nieces, left the scene of her not inglorious reign, and departed for Paris to join Count D'Orsay. Her jointure of £2000 a year was now her sole dependence. She took a suite of apartments in the Rue du Cirque, close to the Champs Élysées, which she furnished and embellished in a very elegant style, and there she began to receive the visits of her friends. In selecting Paris as their place of residence both the Count and herself were actuated by their anticipations of the patronage of their former guest, the Prince Louis Napoleon, at that time President of the French Republic. There seems no doubt that the Prince had not only received at the Countess's hands the warmest hospitality, but that her influence and the Count's had been freely exercised in furtherance of his ambitious projects; and hence that they had established a claim upon his friendship in their hour of need may be allowed. But we are inclined to doubt whether the claim was as powerful

as the Countess's biographer would have us believe. And in any case the Prince must have found it difficult to render effectual assistance to a broken-down man of fashion, with many accomplishments but no "specialty," or a dethroned "Queen of Beauty," whose powers were rapidly waning. Among the many faults of the late Emperor of the French, that of ingratitude to those who had befriended him in adversity can hardly be imputed; and there was, doubtlessly, good reason for the reluctance which he is alleged to have shown in extending his assistance to Lady Blessington and the Count.

And yet there was not much delay. The Countess lived only five weeks after her arrival in Paris, and this brief period barely afforded the President time to consider how he could relieve her. Her death was very sudden. On the 3rd of June, when apparently in good health and spirits, she was attacked by an apoplectic malady, complicated with disease of the heart, and after a brief illness, passed away in the tranquillity of unconsciousness. Her body was afterwards embalmed, and interred in the vaults of the Madeleine, prior to its removal to a mausoleum, constructed for its reception from the designs of Count D'Orsay. This monument is a pyramid of

granite, very finely situated. "The genius which has devised it," says Mrs. Romer, "has succeeded in cheating the tomb of its horrors, without depriving it of its imposing gravity. The simple portal is surmounted by a plain massive cross of stone, and a door, secured by an open work of bronze, leads into a sepulchral chamber. All within breathes the holy calm of eternal repose. . . . An atmosphere of peace seems to pervade the place, and I could almost fancy that a voice from the tomb whispered, in the words of Dante's Beatrice :—

'Io sono in pace!'

"The light of the sun, streaming through a glazed aperture above the door, fell like a ray of heavenly hope upon the symbol of man's redemption—a beautiful copy, in bronze, of Michael Angelo's crucified Saviour—which is affixed to the wall facing the entrance. A simple stone sarcophagus is placed on either side of the chamber, each one surmounted by two white marble tablets, encrusted in the sloping walls."

Lady Blessington's life seems to remarkable

illustration of the power of personal beauty and fascination of manner. To these gifts she owed the position of celebrity and social influence which for so many years she enjoyed. It was these gifts which drew around her so large a circle of men famous in the various departments of arts and letters. Her amiability of disposition cannot be doubted; but this would have failed to move the admiration of Society. As for her intellectual qualifications, they were scarcely above the average. We have spoken candidly of her novels; they have nothing in them to rescue them from oblivion; and her other compositions are of a very feeble character. She had no genius for letter-writing, like Lady Mary Wortley Montagu; no such talent for shrewd observation as Miss Berry displays in her 'Diary.' Yet in many respects she was a Representative Woman; and that consideration may well be given to her career which her published works assuredly do not merit.

But we must acknowledge, in conclusion, that higher estimates of her talents were formed by some of her contemporaries—and those, too, men whose judgment deserves respect—than we have been able to put before the reader. It is an act of justice, therefore, to record them in our pages, as a balance

against our unfavourable criticism. The reader w[illegible] course, remember that they were written by friends w[illegible] had felt the spell of her loveliness and her m[illegible] graces, and that in their composition the writers m[illegible] have borne in mind the generous old maxim, *De m[illegible] nil nisi bonum.* After making these allowances however, due weight must be given to the opin[illegible] decisively expressed by Barry Cornwall Bryan W[illegible] Procter and Walter Savage Landor.

The former wrote the following inscription, which [illegible] set up within the mausoleum:

[illegible]

The subjoined epitaph was written by Landor:—

Infra sepultum est id omne quod sepelliri potest
Mulieris quondam pulcherrimæ.
Ingenium suum summo studio coluit
Aliorum pari adjuvit.
Benefacta sua celare novit; ingenium non ita.
Erga omnis erat largâ bonitate
Peregrinis eleganter hospitalis.
Venit Lutetium Parisiorum Aprili mense:
Quarto Junii die supremum suum obiit.

Thus Englished by its author:—

TO THE MEMORY OF MARGUERITE, COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON.

Underneath is buried all that *could* be buried of a woman once most beautiful. She cultivated her genius with the greatest zeal, and fostered it in others with equal assiduity. The benefits she conferred she could conceal,—her talents not. Elegant in her hospitality to strangers, charitable to all, she retired to Paris in April, and there she breathed her last, on the 4th of June, 1849.

At the risk of wearying our readers with quotations, we condense Mr. H. F. Chorley's *In Memoriam* notice, as it appeared in *The Athenæum*.

He speaks of her writings as fairly representing her gifts and graces, her anecdotical resources, her vivacity of fancy, her cordiality of manner, and her kindness

of heart. They were hastily and slightly thrown off by one with whom authorship was a pursuit assumed rather than instinctive, in the intervals snatched from a life of unselfish good offices and lively social intercourse. [There is no reason to suppose, however, that under any circumstances she could have done better. We believe that she honestly gave the best she had to give.]

From each one of the men of all classes, all creeds, all manner of acquirements, and all colour of political opinions whom Lady Blessington delighted to draw around her, she was skilful in gathering the characteristic trait, the favourite object of interest with a fineness of appreciation which was excelled only by the retentiveness of her memory. Hence, until family bereavements and the pressure of uncertain health—[may we not add, the sad consciousness of pecuniary embarrassments and of an equivocal position?]—somewhat dimmed the gaiety of her spirits, her conversation had a variety of reminiscence, a felicity of *apropos*, and a fascination, of which her writings offer few traces. With a child's eagerness she amused and persuaded herself as easily as she amused and persuaded others. And to her credit be it recorded that she was always earnest in defence of the

absent, in protection of the unpopular, in advocacy of the unknown.

In her own family she was warmly beloved as an indefatigable friend, and eagerly resorted to as an unwearied counsellor.

Such, in the opinion of one who knew her intimately, and was no incompetent critic of men and women, was Marguerite, Countess of Blessington.

A few words may be added respecting Count D'Orsay. He was born in 1801; the son of a general in the French army, and of a daughter (by a morganatic marriage) of the King of Würtemberg. He inherited his father's attachment to the Bonapartist cause, and to his death continued its firm supporter. It was not unnatural that the Napoleonic legend should dazzle the eyes of a man so brilliant and versatile, but of such superficial accomplishments. His unquestionable talents were never consecrated, however, to any noble purpose, and even his artistic faculties were but half developed. He exhibited some skill as a painter and as a sculptor, but attained to no special degree of excellence, and his highest ambition seems to have been to reign in London as the king of the dandies.

After his withdrawal to Paris, in 1849, he attempted to turn his knowledge of art to account as a means of subsistence. It is to his honour that he disapproved of the *coup d'état* by which Napoleon III. overthrew the Republic; and thenceforward ceased to hold any cordial relations with "the President," though the latter, on hearing of his death, exclaimed, "I have lost my best friend." He died of spinal disease on the 4th of August, 1852, having but a few weeks previously been nominated to the post of "directeur des beaux arts." He was a man of considerable intellectual gifts, of rare fascination of manner, and great kindness of heart; and, under happier auspices, might have left behind him something better than the record of a wasted life.

CHARLOTTE BRONTË.

A.D. 1817–1855.

I.

THE Rev. Patrick Blundell, who afterwards assumed the name of Brontë, was a native of the county of Down in Ireland. Having been educated at St. John's College, Cambridge, he took orders in the Church of England, and was appointed to a curacy in Essex. Hence he moved to Hartshead in Yorkshire, where he made the acquaintance of, and married, Maria Branwell, a lady of singular gentleness of disposition and of much quiet intellectual power. After the birth of two daughters, Maria and Elizabeth, both of whom died in childhood, Mr. and Mrs. Brontë removed to Thornton, the birthplace of three remarkable sisters, Charlotte, Emily, and Anne, and of their brother Patrick. Later, the health of Mrs. Brontë, never robust, began to show symptoms of decline; and these increased in severity after the emigration of the

family to Haworth, to the vicarage of which Mr Brontë was preferred in February, 1820. She died in September, 1821, when Charlotte was only five years old. It is unnecessary to indulge in the usual commonplaces respecting the loss which a family sustains through the death of the mother. Unquestionably, it would have been well for the three Brontës if they had not been deprived of the gentle maternal influence; unquestionably, had their mother been spared to train them, many of their angularities of character would have disappeared. On the other hand, it was the self-education to which they were doomed that strengthened their individuality and helped to make them what they were. Charlotte might not have written 'Jane Eyre,' nor Emily 'Wuthering Heights,' had their mother lived.

We propose to tell the story of the life of Charlotte, but that life was so mixed up with the lives of her sisters, that the threads cannot be wholly disentangled. Nor is it desirable that they should be so, considering how largely the three acted and re-acted upon one another.

We are great believers in the power of circumstances to shape and modify the character; and we believe that the sights and sounds which are about

us in our childhood produce each a strong impression on the mind and heart. We would say that there is a strong flavour of *Haworth* in Charlotte Brontë's writings, that her genius was sensibly affected by the tone and colouring of the scenery in which she spent her early years. We feel the breath of the strong Yorkshire breezes in her style. We are conscious of the solitude and silence of the wild Yorkshire moorland in her thoughts. Haworth was hardly the place in which a lyrist of the Thomas Moore stamp could have grown up and sung; hardly the place to have nourished a 'Wild Irish Girl' or an 'Evelina.' But it was no unfitting home for a 'Jane Eyre.'

Its houses, mostly built of a dull grey stone, stretch irregularly along a dull highway road, which no green banks or leafy hedges enliven. A "beck" or stream flows at the base of the hill, which rises quite abruptly to a point crowned by the grey old steepled church. This venerable structure stands a little distance away from the village street, and access is obtained to it by a small lane, that also approaches the parsonage and the belfried school-house. English parsonages are frequently very picturesque in themselves and their surroundings; but

Haworth parsonage has no picturesqueness that one should desire it,—a two-storied house, of the prevailing grey stone, with a small cheerless garden in front, which only a stone wall separates from the cheerless churchyard. The church is of considerable antiquity, but all that might have been interesting in it has disappeared, and it is now as gaunt and cheerless as the parsonage or the village generally. The interior is blocked up with high old-fashioned pews, of a very dark oak. The archæologist will look in vain for the half-illegible brasses and the canopied altar-tombs in which his soul delights; but the lover of letters will turn with sad curiosity to the simple memorials of the Brontë family. Among them are inscriptions recording the death of the mother, Maria Brontë, September 15, 1821, aged 39; of the two daughters who passed away so early, and left no sign; of the wayward, gifted son, Patrick, who died in 1848, aged 30; of Emily Jane, that woman of almost unequalled tragic genius, who died in the same fatal year, aged 29; of her sister Anne, also only 29 when she died in the following year; and of the most famous of the three, who has left so enduring a mark on our English literature, Charlotte, who died in 1855, in the 39th year of her age.

In the immediate neighbourhood of the village the scenery is not calculated to remove the impression of dreariness derived from the village itself. The air is heavy with the smoke of factories; sparse and stunted is the vegetation; there is no pleasant shade of oak, elm, or beech. Instead of bright green hedges, garlanded with eglantine and honeysuckle, or the creeping convolvulus and the wild hop, low stone dykes divide the sterile fields; and instead of a waving expanse of golden wheat or bearded barley, we see only some patches of hungry-looking, grey-green oats. But let us push forward, and before long we find ourselves among the scenery which Charlotte Brontë knew so well how to describe. Far away to an undulating barrier of bold rugged hills stretch the dim and purple moors; and where the barrier is broken we look through the gap to other hills beyond, all alike in colour and outline and character, and all suggesting, with their wild blank aspect, a strange feeling of loneliness, almost of abandonment. Nowhere else in England, we think, could the story of 'Jane Eyre' have been conceived. It is a story instinct with the Northern spirit; and so is the landscape. A little further, and we find the breezy moorland intersected by a labyrinth of glens, each of which resounds with brawling waters, and each of which

is made by its garniture of tree and shrub and creeping plant into a kind of Eden, as contrasted with the bare wilderness around. The dwarf oaks and dense brushwood which clothe the sides of these Arcadian hollows are replaced near the summit by clumps of tall green firs. At the bottom the loud stream plunges along a strangely devious course; now whirling and swirling against miniature headlands; now bubbling over a rocky ledge; now eddying round some gnarled and twisted tree-root. The way is everywhere besprinkled with sweet wild-flowers; with blue-bells, bright as the arch of Heaven, or pearl-white blossoms that spangle the grass like humble emblems of "some starlit spot in space."

The father is never a good substitute in a family for the mother; but a worse substitute than the Rev. Patrick Brontë it would have been difficult to find. He had none of the geniality which is commonly, and not incorrectly, regarded as natural to the Irishman; his reserve was almost ascetic, and his temperament was cautiously cold and serious. There was fire underneath as underneath the snows of Etna, but it seldom burst the bonds of a rigid self-control. He lived so much in himself and to himself that his children were forced to make their own society. Happily, they were

well able to do so; their affection for one another was strong and generous, and they were gifted with inquiring and reflective minds. They sought out amusements for themselves, and amusements which were well-adapted to exercise and develop their intellectual faculties. The eldest, Maria, who survived her mother about four years, carefully read the newspapers, and such interesting and important intelligence as they contained, she duly reported to the little family; so that at an age when most children are pleased with unconsidered trifles, she and her sisters discussed high politics, and the weighty affairs of Church and State. Almost as soon as they could read and write, their inventive ability found scope in the composition of little plays for their own acting. In these the Duke of Wellington, Charlotte's great hero,—she seems to have been attracted by his self-collectedness and profound sense of duty,—invariably appeared triumphant. The Duke was the constant subject of their debates; as were also Cæsar, Hannibal, and Napoleon. A strange illustration, almost a painful one, of their mental preparedness in the very flush of immature childhood, has been recorded by Mr. Brontë. We may adduce it in illustration also of Mr. Brontë's peculiar character:—

On one occasion, when he had gathered [illegible] "brood" around his knees, he asked Anne, the youngest, what a child like her most wanted. "Age and experience," was the prompt reply. Next he inquired of Emily what course he should adopt with her brother Branwell, who was frequently ill-behaved. "Reason with him; and when he won't listen to reason, whip him,"—an answer worthy of the future author of "Wuthering Heights." Of Branwell [illegible] asked what was the best way of knowing the difference between the intellect of man and woman. He replied [illegible] which the advocates of "Woman's Rights" [illegible] forget,—"By [illegible] difference between them as to their [illegible] [illegible] Charlotte [illegible] him what was the best [illegible] answered, "The Bible [illegible] book of Nature." What [illegible] [illegible] a woman [illegible] [illegible] what was the best way [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] at the oldest [illegible] [illegible] it would be [illegible] [illegible] were afforded an interesting

insight into the psychological idiosyncrasies of the Brontës.

The practical management of the vicar's household was placed in the hands of Miss Branwell, an elder sister of the deceased Mrs. Brontë; unfortunately, she was not a woman suited to win the confidence or attract the love of children, and intellectually she was not fitted to sympathise with or to understand her nieces. She was kind to them after her way; but no doubt she regarded them as mysterious puzzles, the exact usefulness of which in the economy of the universe was not very apparent. We think that even Mr. Darwin might have failed to keep pace with their mental development. Their education at first was undertaken by their father, though he left them considerably to themselves, and they gathered stores of information from their incessant perusal of whatever books came in their way. In 1824 the two eldest girls, Maria and Elizabeth, were sent to a school which, a year or two before, had been opened under the auspices of a Rev. Mr. Wilson at Cowan Bridge, for the daughters of clergymen. Partly charitable in its object, it was assuredly conducted on principles of economy; but these principles were pushed to an extreme which threatened almost the starvation of

the inmates. It is not necessary to dwell on the mistakes of management which were committed. They are set forth in the pages of 'Jane Eyre' with the accuracy of a close observer, and the sympathy of one who had suffered from them. Perhaps a little exaggeration is discernible; and it must be conceded that the Brontës, as naturally delicate children, were more easily affected than others by the unfavourable influences of the place. Enough to say that Maria and Elizabeth grew weaker every day, weaker and sadder and more depressed, though during the latter portion of their sojourn in the house of bondage they derived much comfort from the company of their sisters Charlotte and Emily. In the spring of 1825, the illness of Maria was so alarming as to necessitate her immediate removal, and she returned home; but it was only to die. Five or six weeks later she was followed by Elizabeth, who lingered only a few months. As it was now evident that Cowan Bridge meant death to the Brontës, Charlotte and Emily were brought back to Haworth at the autumn of the year which had deprived them of their two sisters.

The young family was thus reduced to four. The natural effect of the deaths of Maria and Elizabeth was

to intensify all that was most individual in the characters of the survivors, and to force them still more completely in upon themselves for subjects of entertainment or reflection. The children—they were still children—continued to read, and write, and think. Poems, plays, romances, and essays flowed from their prolific pens; they read all the books they could procure, from dusty folios to trim modern octavos; they discussed the motives and actions of great men, and the consequences of great events, in debates which frequently became quite impassioned. Charlotte, by virtue of force of character rather than of supreme mental power, took the lead in these symposia, and formed the centre, as it were, round which the others gravitated. Her 'History of the year 1829' supplies us with an interesting picture of the inner life of Haworth Vicarage, and may be advantageously compared with certain passages in Harriet Martineau's *Autobiography*:—

"Once papa lent my sister Maria a book. It was an old geography book: she wrote on its blank leaf, 'Papa lent me this book.' This book is a hundred and twenty years old: it is at this moment lying before me. While I write this I am in the kitchen of the parsonage, Haworth; Tabby, the servant, is washing up the breakfast things; and Anne, my youngest

sister (Maria was my eldest), is kneeling on a chair looking at some cakes which Tabby has been baking for us. Emily is in the parlour brushing the carpet. Papa and Branwell are gone to Keighley. Aunt is upstairs in her room, and I am sitting by the table writing this in the kitchen. Keighley is a small town five miles from here. Papa and Branwell are gone for the newspaper, the *Leeds Intelligencer*, a most excellent Tory newspaper, edited by Mr. Wood, and the proprietor, Mr. Henneman. We take two and see three newspapers a week. We take the *Leeds Intelligencer* (Tory), and the *Leeds Mercury* (Whig), edited by Mr. Baines, and his brother, son-in-law, and his two sons Edward and Talbot. We see the *John Bull*; it is a high Tory, very violent. Mr. Driver lends us it, as likewise *Blackwood's Magazine*, the most able periodical there is. The editor is Mr. Christopher North, an old man seventy-five years of age; the first of April is his birthday: his company are Timothy Tickler, Morgan O'Doherty, Malachi Malagrowther, Mullion, Warnell, and James Hogg, a man of most extraordinary genius, a Scottish shepherd. Our plays were established: 'Young Men,' June 1829; 'Our Fellows,' July 1827; 'Islanders,' December 1827. These are our three great plays that are not kept secret. Emily's and my best plays were established

the 1st of December, 1827; the others, March, 1828. Best plays mean secret plays; they are very nice ones. All our plays are very strange ones. Their nature I need not write on paper, for I think I shall always remember them. The 'Young Men' play took its rise from some wooden soldiers Branwell had; 'Our Fellows' from 'Æsop's Fables'; and the 'Islanders' from several events which happened. I will sketch out the origin of our plays more explicitly if I can. First: 'Young Men.' Papa bought Branwell some wooden soldiers at Leeds. When papa came home it was night, and we were in bed; so next morning Branwell came to our door with a box of soldiers. Emily and I jumped out of bed, and I snatched up one and exclaimed, 'This is the Duke of Wellington! This shall be the duke!' When I had said this, Emily likewise took up one, and said it should be hers; when Anne came down, she said one should be hers. Mine was the prettiest of the whole, and the tallest, and the most perfect in every part. Emily's was a grave-looking fellow, and we called him 'Gravey.' Anne's was a queer little thing, much like herself, and we called him 'Waiting-Boy.' Branwell chose his, and called him 'Buonaparte.'"

The wide range of Charlotte's observation and

inquiry is further shown by a list of painters, "whose works she wished to see," drawn up when she was scarcely thirteen :—

"Guido Reni, Julio Romano, Titian, Raphael, Michael Angelo, Correggio, Annibal Carracci, Leonardo da Vinci, Fra Bartolomeo, Carlo Cignani, Vandyke, Rubens, Bartolomeo Ramaghi."

To enable the reader to appreciate the peculiarities of her genius, as they developed themselves while she was still in her early youth, at an age, indeed, when most girls are mere "bread-and-butter misses," we make a couple of extracts from Mrs. Gaskell's memoir. The first is taken from the introductory to a juvenile composition, entitled 'Tales of the Highlanders,' and is of a political complexion :—

"Parliament was opened, and the great Catholic question was brought forward, and the Duke's measures were disclosed, and all was slander, violence, party-spirit, and confusion. Oh! those six months, from the time of the King's speech to the end! Nobody could write, think, or speak on any subject but the Catholic question, and the Duke of Wellington, and Mr. Peel. I remember the day when the Intelligence Extraordinary came with Mr. Peel's speech in it, containing the terms on which

the Catholics were to be let in! With what eagerness Papa tore off the cover, and how we all gathered round him, and with what breathless anxiety we listened, as one by one they were disclosed, and explained, and argued upon so ably, and so well; and then when it was all out, how aunt said that she thought it was excellent, and that the Catholics could do no harm with such good security. I remember also the doubts as to whether it would pass the House of Lords, and the prophecies that it would not; and when the paper came which was to decide the question, the anxiety was almost dreadful with which we listened to the whole affair: the opening of the doors; the hush; the royal dukes in their robes, and the great duke *in green sash and waistcoat*; the rising of all the peeresses when he rose; the reading of his speech—papa saying that his words were like precious gold; and lastly, the majority of one to four (*sic*) in favour of the Bill. But this is a digression."

There is here a graphic power of ordering details which shows the future author of 'Jane Eyre'; in our next specimen, the imaginative, the writer's fancy is too vehement for her language:—

"It is well-known that the Genii have declared that

unless they perform certain arduous duties every year of a mysterious nature, all the worlds in the firmament will be burnt up, and gathered together in one mighty globe, which will roll in solitary grandeur through the vast wilderness of space, inhabited [illegible] by the four high princes of the Genii till time [illegible] be succeeded by Eternity; and the impudence [illegible] is only to be paralleled by another of their assertions, namely, "that by their magic might they can reduce the world to a desert, the purest waters to streams of livid poison, and the clearest lakes to stagnant water, the pestilential vapours of which shall slay all [illegible] creature, except the blood-thirsty beast of the [illegible] and the ravenous bird of the rock. But that [illegible] [illegible] this desolation the palace of the [illegible] Genii shall rise sparkling in the wilderness, and [illegible] [illegible] of their war-cry shall spread over the land [illegible] morning, at noontide, and night; [illegible] that they shall have their annual feast over the [illegible] dead, and shall yearly rejoice with [illegible] [illegible]."

Yet [illegible] quotation, and that a little poem, [illegible] about 1830.

The Wounded Stag.

Passing amid the deepest shade
  Of the wood's sombre heart,
Last night I saw a wounded deer
  Laid lonely and apart.

Such light as pierced the crowded boughs
  (Light scattered, scant and dim),
Passed through the fern that formed his couch
  And centred full on him.

Pain trembled in his weary limbs,
  Pain filled his patient eye,
Pain-crushed amid the shadowy fern
  His branchy crown did lie.

Where were his comrades? where his mate?
  All from his death-bed gone?
And he, thus struck and desolate,
  Suffered and bled alone.

Did he feel what a man might feel
  Friend-left, and sore distrest?
Did Pain's keen dart and Grief's sharp sting
  Strive in his mangled breast?

Did longing for affection lost
  Barb every deadly dart;
Love unrepaid, and Faith betrayed,
  Did these torment his heart?

No! leave to man his proper doom!
  These are the pangs that rise
Around the bed of state and gloom,
  When Adam's offspring dies!

It cannot be denied that these verses exhibit a certain irregularity of rhythm, and a want of feeling for the melody of verse. It is true also that the thought sometimes seems too large for the writer's utterance. Yet Charlotte Brontë's characteristics as a novelist are plainly foreshadowed in the vivid picture of the wounded stag, lying prone amid the rustling fern, with a scanty ray of light struggling through the intertangled branches above him, as also in the path of the reflections which it suggests. If the lyric be the father of the man, the poetess is here, very evidently, the mother of the novelist! And we may see how the conditions of Charlotte Brontë's life, and the influences under which her intellect was maturing, all tended irresistibly to colour her genius

with that profound melancholy which we recognise in her three great works.

We may here attempt a description of the presiding spirit of the Brontë family. She was very small in figure, a perfect Queen Titania, but not at all dwarf-like or stunted; for her head, and limbs were harmoniously proportioned to her slight and delicate body. Soft and brown was her abundant hair; her eyes were large, luminous, well-shaped, and of a deep reddish brown, which, when closely inspected, seemed to be made up of a great variety of tints. Their general expression was one of calm intelligence; but at times they flashed out a sudden light, like that of a lamp new-kindled. Mrs. Gaskell says she never saw the like in any human creature. As for the rest of her features, they were plain and irregular; but it was not easy to dwell on the large nose, or mouth slightly awry, while one was under the spell of her glance or of the power that spoke in every lineament of her countenance. Of course she had small hands, and feet that might have befitted a fairy. As became so trim and refined a creature, Charlotte Brontë was remarkably neat in her personal attire; and the small hands and feet were always set off by well-made shoes and gloves.

In January, 1831, she was sent to school again, her teacher being a Miss W——, who resided at Roe Head, on the Leeds and Huddersfield Road. Miss W—— was a woman of tact, ability, and insight: she perceived the high qualities of her pupil, and did her best to develop them by careful training. A twelvemonth's tuition from this lady benefited her greatly. Returning to Haworth Parsonage, she resumed the daily order of her quiet life. In the morning, from nine till half-past twelve, she practised drawing, and superintended the lessons of her sisters. A long moorland walk occupied the time until dinner. Between dinner and tea, needlework; after tea, writing, reading, drawing, with the occasional diversion of a chat with one or two of Mr Brontë's brother-clergymen. Her principal amusement, however, was reading. She read continually and, like most strong minds, she read omnivorously. A healthy intellect invariably assimilates whatever is good and wholesome in a book, and rejects whatever might prove injurious. But Charlotte Brontë not only read, she reflected; she analysed what she read, and formed a careful judgment upon it; in this way cultivating a habit of close and accurate criticism. The miscellaneousness of her reading is shown in the

advice which she gave to an old school-fellow, who had asked Charlotte Brontë to recommend her some books for her perusal.

"I will do so," she says, "in as few words as I can. If you like poetry, let it be first-rate; Milton, Shakspeare, Thomson, Goldsmith, Pope (if you will, though I don't admire him), Scott, Byron, Campbell, Wordsworth, and Southey. Now don't be startled at the names of Shakspeare and Byron. Both these were great men, and their works are like themselves. You will know how to choose the good and avoid the evil; the finest passages are always the purest, the bad are invariably revolting; you will never wish to read them over twice. Omit the comedies of Shakspeare, and the 'Don Juan,' perhaps the 'Cain' of Byron, though the latter is a magnificent poem, and read the rest fearlessly; that must indeed be a depraved mind which can gather evil from 'Henry VIII.,' from 'Richard III.,' from 'Macbeth,' and 'Hamlet,' and 'Julius Cæsar.' Scott's sweet, wild, romantic poetry can do you no harm. Nor can Wordsworth's, nor Campbell's, nor Southey's—the greater part at least of his; some is certainly objectionable. For history, read Hume, Rollin, and the 'Universal History,' if you *can;* I never did. For

fiction, read Scott alone; all novels after his are worthless. [We should infer from this sweeping condemnation that Charlotte Brontë had read but little fiction. She would not have called the works of Fielding and Richardson "worthless."]. For biography, read Johnson's 'Lives of the Poets,' Boswell's 'Life of Johnson,' Southey's 'Life of Nelson,' Lockhart's 'Life of Burns,' Moore's 'Life of Sheridan,' Moore's 'Life of Byron,' Wolfe's 'Remains.' [Miss Brontë refers, we suppose, to the Rev. Charles Wolfe, still remembered as the author of the touching lyric, 'The Burial of Sir John Moore.] For natural history, read Bewick, and Audubon, and Goldsmith, and White's 'History of Selborne.' For divinity, your brother will advise you there. I can only say, adhere to standard authors, and avoid novelty."

In July, 1835, Charlotte, then in her twentieth year, went to Miss W.'s, at Roe Head, as a teacher, accompanied by her sister Emily as a pupil. The latter, however, soon showed symptoms of the disease which proved so fatal to her family, and as she pined after the fresh breezes of her beloved moors, her return home became imperative. During the remainder of her life, a brief as it was a tragic

romance, she left the lonely parsonage only twice; first, for six months, when she dragged through the weary days as a teacher at Halifax; and again, when, for ten months, she sojourned with her sister at Brussels. The character of this strange self-reliant woman affords one of the most interesting psychological studies we know of. Her organisation was subtly sensitive, yet her courage was supreme. Though she felt pain with terrible acuteness, she bore it without a murmur, proudly rejecting sympathy when offered. Her imagination was equally active and daring; yet she could confine herself to the most commonplace details. In sheer strength of intellect she surpassed even Charlotte; there is nothing like her 'Wuthering Heights' in the English language. It always produces upon us the same effect as an Æschylean tragedy; the same sense of hopeless struggle against the arbitrament of an irresistible Fate.

Charlotte Brontë seems to have enjoyed a period of rest and happiness at Miss W.'s, until her scrupulous performance of her duties and her devotion to her studies, plunged her into ill-health. As her physical energies failed, her imagination overpowered her judgment, and she sank into a melancholy and despondent condition which was by no means natural

to her. During the Christmas holidays, however, the "smile upon the cheek of Home," and the companionship of her beloved sisters, revived her spirits, and she found herself able to resume her literary efforts. In conjunction with her sisters she submitted some poetical compositions to the judgment of Southey. The veteran returned a kind and thoughtful answer, acknowledging the merit of what they had submitted to him; but earnestly dissuading them from making literature the business of a woman's life.

Resigning her engagement at Miss W.'s in 1838, Charlotte Brontë returned to Haworth to take the management of the little household, which sorely needed her patient good sense and methodical attention to business. Clouds, however, gathered over the home which had once been so bright. Her brother Branwell caused terrible anxiety by his wild irregularities, which constantly threatened a conflict between his father and himself; and her sister Anne was ailing, with a pain in her side, a cough, and a difficulty of breathing, which reminded Charlotte only too painfully of the illness and death of Maria and Elizabeth. In her devotion to the interests of those so dear to her, she rejected an advantageous offer of marriage which was made to her at this time. But Mr.

Brontë's income was limited, and it too soon became apparent that, with the increasing demands made upon it, it would not suffice to keep all the Brontës at home. In 1839, both Charlotte and Anne again essayed the experience of "governessing"; to both it proved a bitter experience. Charlotte found hers unendurable, and in July returned home. The idea then occurred to her of starting a school, but for this purpose a small capital was necessary, and that capital was not forthcoming. Thus she was driven back upon the old plan of going out to teach.

We learn something of her wishes, trials, and modes of thought from a letter, which in August, 1840, she addressed to a much-valued friend. It is printed by Mrs. Gaskell:—

"Have you seen anything of Miss H., lately? I wish they, or somebody else, would get me a situation. I have answered advertisements without number, but my applications have met with no success.

"I have got another bale of French books from G., containing upwards of forty volumes. I have read about half. They are like the rest, clever, wicked, sophistical, and immoral. The best of it is, they give

one a thorough idea of France and Paris, and are the best substitute for French conversation that I have met with.

"I positively have nothing more to say to you, for I am in a stupid humour. You must excuse this letter not being quite as long as your own. I have written to you [illegible] that you might not look after the post-[illegible] in vain. Preserve this writing as a curiosity of calligraphy—I think it is exquisite—all brilliant black blots, and utterly illegible letters.

"CALIBAN."

"'The wind bloweth where it listeth. Thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth.' That, I believe, Scripture, though in what chapter or book, or whether it be correctly quoted, I can't possibly say. However, it behoves me to write a letter to a young woman [illegible] name of [illegible], with whom I was once acquainted [illegible] morning march, when my spirit was young. [illegible] woman wished me to write to her some [illegible] though I have nothing to say—I e'en put [illegible] day by day, till at last, fearing that she will [illegible] by her [illegible]' I feel constrained to sit down and [illegible] together, which she may call a letter [illegible] she pleases. Now, if the young

woman expects sense in this production, she will find herself miserably disappointed. I shall dress her a dish of salmagundi—I shall cook a hash—compound a stew—toss up an *omelette soufflée à la Française* and send it her with my respects. The wind, which is very high up in our hills of Judæa, though, I suppose, down in the Philistine flats of B. parish it is nothing to speak of, has produced the same effects on the contents of my knowledge-box that a quaigh of usquebaugh does upon those of most other bipeds. I see everything *couleur de rose;* and am strongly inclined to dance a jig, if I knew how. I think I must partake of the nature of a pig or an ass—both which animals are strongly affected by a high wind. From what quarter the wind blows I cannot tell, for I never could in my life; but I should very much like to know how the great brewing-tub of Bridlington Bay works, and what sort of yeasty froth rises just now on the waves.

"A woman of the name of Mrs. B., it seems, wants a teacher. I wish she would have me; and I have written to Miss W., to tell her so. Verily, it is a delightful thing to live here at home, at full liberty to do just what one pleases. But I recollect some scrubby old fable about grasshoppers and ants, by a

scrubby old knave yclept Æsop; the grasshoppers sang all the summer, and starved all the winter.

"A distant relation of mine, one Patrick Branwell, has set off to seek his fortune in the wild, wandering, adventurous, romantic, knight-errant-like capacity of clerk on the Leeds and Manchester railroad. Leeds and Manchester — where are they? Cities in the wilderness — like Tadmor, *alias* Palmyra — are they not?

"There is one little trait respecting Mr. W., which lately came to my knowledge. [Mr. W. was a curate, whose services her father, through increasing duty and failing health, had been compelled to engage] which gives a glimpse of the better side of his character. Last Saturday night he had been sitting an hour in the parlour with papa; and as he went away, I heard papa say to him: 'What is the matter with you? You seem in very low spirits to [illegible]' 'Oh, I don't know. I've been to see a poor [illegible] who, I'm afraid, is dying.' 'Indeed, what [illegible] her name?' 'Susan Bland, the daughter of John Bland, the superintendent.' Now Susan [illegible] and best scholar in the Sunday [illegible] when I heard that, I thought I would go [illegible] as I could to see her. I did go on Monday

afternoon, and found her on her way to that 'bourn whence no traveller returns.' After sitting with her some time, I happened to ask her mother if she thought a little port-wine would do her good. She replied that the doctor had recommended it; and that when Mr. W. was last there, he had brought them a bottle of wine and a jar of preserves. She added, that he was always good-natured to poor folks, and seemed to have a deal of feeling and kind-heartedness about him. No doubt there are defects in his character, but there are also good qualities. . . . God bless him! I wonder who, with his advantages, would be without his faults. I know many of his faulty actions, many of his weak points; yet, where I am, he shall always find rather a defender than an accuser. To be sure, my opinion will go but a very little way to decide his character: what of that? People should do right as far as their ability extends. You are not to suppose from all this, that Mr. W. and I are on very amiable terms; we are not at all. We are distant, cold, and reserved. We seldom speak; and when we do, it is only to exchange the most trivial and commonplace remarks."

We see in this letter, as in all Charlotte Brontë's correspondence, her thorough straightforwardness and

her power of forming a just, if not a very generous, appreciation of character. But we see, too, that forced, that artificial "fun" which illustrates her absolute deficiency in the genial quality of humour. She had wonderful dramatic power, a rare faculty of description, an absolute command over the finer emotions, a vivid imagination, a quick sympathy with nature: but she had no humour, or what she had was either of a grimly grotesque kind, or else assumed the shape of satire. In all her three great novels, there is not a page which awakens a hearty and innocent laugh. Her curates in 'Shirley' are meant to be laughed at; but she dissects them so bitterly, and exposes them so mercilessly, that we cannot choose but compassionate them. Had she enjoyed a keener sense of the ridiculous, had she been able to represent the humorous side of life, her novels would have been wholesomer than they are, and her fame would have been broader and, perhaps, more lasting. An eminent "hand" has recently compared her with the author of 'Adam Bede,' to the disadvantage of the latter. A [illegible] seems to us unjust and misleading. [illegible] compare the rainbow with the sun, [illegible] with the mighty lapse of waters. Between two writers of such different temperaments, different

aims, different qualities of genius, no fair comparison is possible. They cannot be appraised by the same standard. But it may be pointed out, that while it is not altogether impossible that George Eliot might have created a Rochester, perhaps even a Shirley, it is quite certain that Charlotte Brontë could not have conceived a Mrs. Poyser.

In March, 1841, Miss Brontë obtained her last engagement in England as a governess; and it proved as fortunate as her former experience had been the reverse. Her employers were courteous, sympathetic, generous; able to perceive and willing to acknowledge the value of the service she rendered. Her life under their roof was a happy one, and allowed full scope for her vivid and healthy nature to display itself. But the rapidly failing health of her sister Anne, once more called her home. Everybody saw that the invalid needed the vigilant affection and tender guidance of the elder sister. To provide the ways and means, by which the little family-circle might be reunited, Charlotte once more took up her project of a school. Just at this time her old friend Miss W. was anxious to give up her establishment at Dewsbury Moor, and she offered it to the Brontës on advanta-

geous terms. On consideration the sisters, who were trained to judge each other and themselves, came to the conclusion that they were deficient in knowledge of a special kind, essential to the successful management of a school. This conclusion led to an alteration in their plans. Obtaining the necessary funds from their aunt, Charlotte and Emily, with characteristic independence, started for Brussels, in order to study French and music with greater precision and completeness. At Brussels they fortunately obtained an introduction to M. Héger, a man of musical ability, and of marked skill in tuition, who received them into his *pensionnat* at a very reasonable charge, and zealously devoted himself to the cultivation of their mental powers.

II.

In Miss Brontë's 'The Professor,' and in her 'Villette,' she has given us a wonderfully realistic picture of her life at Brussels. Unquestionably it had a marked influence on her genius. She paints with photographic fidelity the novel scenes that passed before her gaze, and the fresh aspects of character that offered themselves to her study. It is evident that she was greatly struck by the quaint features of the mediæval city, with its glittering religious processions, its national festivals, its old-world relics, its ancient churches and houses, rich in fine carvings and rare artistic details. She allows us to see how strong an impression they produced. The daily work of the *pensionnat*, and the idiosyncrasies of its teachers and pupils, are also exhibited with a startling boldness. Yet it is borne in upon the reader that all reference to her inner life and more intimate personal experiences is studiously excluded. She gives us Brussels as it

appeared to Charlotte Bronte, but not Charlotte Bronte as she fared at Brussels. In perusing 'Jane Eyre,' or its companion fictions, we are constantly forced to ask ourselves: where did their authorization a glimpse of those depths of passion which she fathoms with such an unfaltering hand? The plummet [illegible] truly that we know it cannot be chance-work, that it could not have been effected by any effort of the imagination. We turn, therefore, for an answer to the record of her career. But what help does it afford us? In that quiet Haworth parsonage [illegible] tame [illegible] as a governess, in her brief [illegible] brilliant [illegible] in the world of letters, [illegible] few months of wedded happiness, we see [illegible] somewhat reserved, always self-reliant, patient [illegible] woman, leading an existence as [illegible] of ordinary English daughters, with the exception [illegible] thrown upon it by the [illegible] Bronte, and the deep [illegible] her sisters. We [illegible] the wonderful knowledge [illegible] and almost desperate [illegible] period of Charlotte Bronte [illegible] that she must have [illegible] it was there that she

must have learned the passion of Jane Eyre for Rochester, of Shirley for Moore.

M. Hèger was not long in discovering that Charlotte and Emily differed altogether from his average pupils. Mrs. Gaskell tells us that he seems to have rated Emily's genius as something even higher than Charlotte's, which, indeed, it was, though it lacked Charlotte's equilibrium. Emily, according to M. Hèger, had a head for logic, and a capability of argument, unusual in a man, and rare indeed in a woman. The force of this gift, however, was impaired by her stubborn tenacity of will, which blinded her to all reasoning where her own wishes, or her own sense of right, was concerned. "She should have been a man—a great navigator," said M. Hèger, in speaking of her, "her powerful reason would have deduced new spheres of discovery from the knowledge of the old; and her strong imperious purpose would never have been daunted by opposition or discovery; never have given way but with life." For such pupils their tutor adopted a new method, throwing aside grammar and vocabulary, and bringing into play their intellectual perceptions. He chose passages from the best authors; read them, analysed them; indicated their felicities and peculiarities of style; and then

required his pupils to produce an original composition based upon the lesson they had just received.

Here is a letter written by Charlotte in May, 1842:—

"I was twenty-six years old a week or two since, and at this ripe time of life I am a schoolgirl, and, on the whole, very happy in that capacity. It felt very strange at first to submit to authority instead of exercising it, to obey orders instead of giving them; but I like that state of things. I returned to it with the same avidity that a cow, that has long been kept on dry hay, returns to fresh grass. Don't laugh at my simile. It is natural to me to submit, and only unnatural to command.

"This is a large school, in which there are about forty externes, or day-pupils, and twelve pensionnaires, or boarders. Madame Heger, the head, is a lady of precisely the same cast of mind, degree of cultivation, and quality of intellect as Miss ——. I think the severe points are a little softened, because she has not been disappointed, and consequently [illegible]. In a word, she is a married instead of a maiden lady. There are three teachers in the school—Mademoiselle Blanche, Mademoiselle Sophie, and Mademoiselle Marie. The two first have no particular character. One is an old maid, and the other

will be one. Mademoiselle Marie is talented and original, but of repulsive and arbitrary manners, which have made the whole school, except myself and Emily, her bitter enemies. No less than seven masters attend, to take the different branches of education—French, drawing, music, singing, writing, arithmetic, and German. All in the house are Catholics except ourselves, one other girl, and the gouvernante of Madame's children, an Englishwoman, in rank something between a lady's maid and a nursery governess. The difference in country and religion makes a broad line of demarcation between us and all the rest. We are completely isolated in the midst of numbers. Yet I think I am never unhappy; my present life is so delightful, so congenial to my own nature, compared to that of a governess. My time, constantly occupied, passes too rapidly. Hitherto both Emily and I have had good health, and therefore we have been able to work well.

"There is one individual of whom I have not yet spoken—M. Hèger, the husband of Madame. He is professor of rhetoric, a man of power as to mind, but very choleric and irritable in temperament. He is very angry with me just at present, because I

have written a translation which he chose to characterize as '*peu correct.*' He did not tell me so, but wrote the word on the margin of my book, and asked in very stern phrase, how it happened that my compositions were always better than my translations, adding that the thing seemed to him inexplicable. The fact is, some weeks ago, in a high-flown humour he forbade me to use either dictionary or grammar in translating the most difficult English compositions into French. This makes the task rather arduous, and compels me every now and then to introduce an English word, which nearly plucks the eyes [illegible] his head when he sees it. Emily and he don't draw well together at all. Emily works like a horse, and she has had great difficulties to contend with—far greater than I have had. Indeed, those who come to a French school for instruction ought previously to have acquired a considerable knowledge of the French language, otherwise they will lose a great [illegible] time, for the course of instruction is adapted to [illegible] to foreigners, and in these large establishments they will not change their ordinary course for [illegible] two strangers. The free [illegible] that M. Heger has vouchsafed to give us an [illegible] to be considered a great favour, and

I can perceive they have already excited much spite and jealousy in the school.

"You will abuse this letter for being short and dreary, and there are a hundred things which I want to tell you, but I have not time. Brussels is a beautiful city. The Belgians hate the English. Their external morality is more rigid than ours. To lace the stays without a handkerchief on the neck is considered a disgusting piece of indelicacy."

Charlotte and Emily were recalled to England towards the end of the year by the death of their aunt. Afterwards the little Haworth family spent their Christmas together. In the spring Charlotte returned to Brussels; not as pupil, but as teacher, with the remuneration of £16 a year, board and lodging. This was not a wise step. Charlotte was hard-worked, with little leisure for self-improvement, isolated, and exposed to the ill-usage of Madame Hèger, who did not like her. With her customary truthfulness she expresses her feelings in a letter to her friend:—

"Mary urges me very much to leave Brussels and go to her; but, at present, however tempted to take such a step, I should not feel justified in doing so. To leave a certainty for a complete uncertainty,

would be to the last degree imprudent. N[illegible] standing that, Brussels is indeed desolate [illegible] now . . . I am completely alone. I cannot [illegible] Belgians anything. It is a curious position [illegible] utterly solitary in the midst of numbers. Sometimes the solitude oppresses me to an exce[illegible] day later I felt as if I could bear it no [illegible] I went to Madame Hoger and gave her notice [illegible] it had depended on her, I should certainly have [illegible] been at liberty; but M. Hoger, having heard [illegible] was in agitation, sent for me the day after [illegible] pronounced with vehemence his de[illegible] [illegible] should not leave. I could not, at that [illegible] persevered in my intention without exciting [illegible] [illegible] I promised to stay a little while longer [illegible] sometimes I [illegible] myself how long I shall stay [illegible] [illegible] yet I have only asked the question, I have [illegible] [illegible] However, when I have [illegible] [illegible] I think it, I think I [illegible] [illegible] and depart. Twinges [illegible] [illegible] the heart every now and then [illegible] [illegible] glaring, and I am stupefied [illegible] [illegible] headache. I have [illegible] [illegible] another in this place [illegible] [illegible] country, can hardly believe

it is possible life can be monotonous in the centre of a brilliant capital like Brussels; but so it is. I feel it most on holidays, when all the girls and teachers go out to visit, and it sometimes happens that I am left during several hours quite alone, with four great desolate school-rooms at my disposition. I try to read, I try to write; but in vain. I then wander about from room to room, but the silence and loneliness of all the house weighs down one's spirits like lead. You will hardly believe that Madame Hèger (good and kind as I have described her) never comes near me on these occasions. I own I was astonished the first time I was left alone thus; when everybody else was enjoying the pleasures of a *fête* day with their friends, and she knew I was quite by myself, and never took the least notice of me. Yet, I understand, she praises me very much to everybody, and says what excellent lessons I give. She is not colder to me than she is to the other teachers; but they are less dependent on her than I am. They have relations and acquaintances in Brussels. You remember the letter she wrote me when I was in England? How kind and affectionate that was; is it not odd? In the meantime, the complaints I make at present are a sort of relief

which I permit myself. In all other respects I am well satisfied with my position, and you may say so to people who inquire after me (if any one does). Write to me, dear, whenever you can. You do a good deal when you send me a letter, for you comfort a very desolate heart."

Domestic reasons, the increasing unkindliness of Madame Héger, and the want of sympathy between herself and her surroundings, induced Charlotte Brontë to give up her situation and return home. She arrived at Haworth on the [illegible] of January, [illegible]. After a brief rest, she renewed her anxious efforts to augment the limited resources of her family, and elaborated a scheme for taking a limited number of pupils as boarders. Unfortunately, though she vigorously canvassed her friends and acquaintances, [illegible] was Haworth, remote, [illegible], a place calculated to attract [illegible]. [illegible] that, in the face of so many [illegible], and hardened as she was with [illegible] by her brother's waywardness and [illegible] taking right, she preserved her energy [illegible] brave and hopeful spirit. In [illegible] letters there are traces of despondency, but there

were none in her conduct. People who conceive of Charlotte Brontë as a romantic woman of genius, given over to poetic sadness, brooding among the "infinite silences," and feeding upon her heart in melancholy solitude, form, we are persuaded, a most mistaken conception. Mr. Wemyss Reid has clearly shown, what, indeed, was not difficult to discover before, that she was really gifted with a very genial temperament, and in all her ways was practical and sensible. There was nothing of the Byronic in her mood. Nor had she the will or the temptation to play the part of the *femme incomprise*. She had, no doubt, her hours of gloom, her periods of suffering; it could hardly be otherwise, considering the Celtic strain in her blood, and the conditions which hampered her daily life. But, as a whole, she was not only a woman of genius, but a woman of great common sense; and no one can read the story of her life without being the better for it.

In the autumn of 1845, the three sisters were induced to seek publicity for their literary efforts. It came about in this wise: Charlotte fell in with a manuscript volume of verse, written by her sister Emily, and on reading it, was persuaded that the verse was of no average kind; not the verse of the

ordinary rhymester, accurate, perhaps elegant [illegible] wholly conventional; but the utterance of [illegible] poetic mind. The singular reserve of Emily [illegible] from the insight which even her sister had [illegible] obtained into her inner self; and it was [illegible] considerable difficulty that Charlotte drew from [illegible] reluctant consent to the publication of her work.

Matters had advanced thus far when it was [illegible] covered that Anne, too, had put her thought [illegible] verse of much tenderness and delicacy. That [illegible] should be published was, of course, a necessity [illegible] Emily and Anne were unwilling to appear [illegible] the public without their sister, and eventually [illegible] determined to make a selection from the [illegible] of the three, issuing it in one volume with [illegible] [illegible] Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell. [illegible] [illegible] Charlotte, was dictated [illegible] [illegible] at assuming Christian [illegible] [illegible] while they did not [illegible] [illegible] They had not [illegible] [illegible] their [illegible] [illegible] as [illegible] [illegible] apprehen[illegible] [illegible] writer [illegible] [illegible] them as [illegible]

in Lady Morgan's case, with the weapon of personality, or insulted them with an ostentatious flattery which was even more offensive.

We need not dwell upon the heart-burnings they endured, and the difficulties they encountered, in their effort to gain access to the public ear. But at length they found publishers for their little volume in Messrs. Ayton and Jones, of Paternoster Row. It appeared in May, 1846; to meet with the scantiest possible attention. Yet two or three critics detected in it the ring of true metal; and especially in the poems by "Ellis Bell," recognised something fresh, vigorous, and original. Of the others it might be said that good as was their work it showed nevertheless that the metrical form was a hindrance rather than a help to their genius.

Shortly after this event, Charlotte accompanied her father to Manchester, where he successfully underwent an operation for cataract. On her return home she resumed the literary labour in which she delighted; which was, in fact, a necessity for her. Each sister had written a prose tale; Emily's was 'Wuthering Heights'; Anne's was 'Agnes Grey'; Charlotte's 'The Professor.' They endeavoured to find a pub-

lisher for the three; and when in this they failed, the three books were sent round separately. But publishers are slow to recognise new and untried talent. Though 'The Professor' went the round of the trade, it found acceptance nowhere, nor any acknowledgment of merit, so that something like the chill of despair began to invade her heart. Yes; but she did not allow the feeling to get the better of her. While 'The Professor' was plodding its weary way, she began 'Jane Eyre.' The motive of that powerful book was thus described by herself:—"I once told my sisters that they were wrong—even morally wrong—in making their heroines beautiful as a matter of course. They replied that it was impossible to make a heroine interesting on any other terms. My answer was, 'I will prove to you that you are wrong; I will show you a heroine as plain and as small as myself, who shall be as interesting as any of yours.' Hence 'Jane Eyre'; but she is not myself, any further than that." Of course the heroine had to be represented as loved and loving; and for this purpose it was requisite to endow her with a power of attraction which should depend on psychological causes. For our own part we never can believe that "Jane Eyre" is "plain." We know that she says so of herself,

and that other characters infer it; but we think the impression produced on the reader's mind is, that in spite of her irregular features and even her green eyes, she must still have possessed considerable personal charms.

In August, 1847, 'Jane Eyre' was finished and despatched to Messrs. Smith and Elder, the only firm who had spoken favourably of 'The Professor,' while declining, for business reasons, to publish it. To its author's surprise and delight it was accepted; and by the 16th of October it was printed and published. Before the close of the year its unknown author was acknowledged as one of the first of living novelists, and the name of "Currer Bell" had become a name to conjure with.

The knowledge of her venture had been kept from her father lest it should prove a failure, and that failure should add to his many trials. But when it had proved successful beyond the most sanguine expectations, her sisters urged her to reveal the secret. So with a copy of the book, and two or three reviews, she entered his study one afternoon.

"Papa, I've been writing a book."

"Have you, my dear?"

"Yes, and I want you to read it."

"I am afraid it will try my eyes too much."

Charlotte Brontë's handwriting was quite microscopic in character; singularly neat, but painfully small.

"My dear! you've never thought of the expense it will be! It will be almost sure to be a loss, for how can you get a book sold? No one knows you or your name."

"But, papa, I don't think it will be a loss; no more will you, if you will first let me read you a review or two, and tell you more about it."

She sat down and read some of the reviews to her father, gave him the copy of 'Jane Eyre,' which she had reserved for him, and left him to read it. When he came in to tea, he said:—"Girls, do you know Charlotte has been writing a book, and it is much better than likely."

It is too late now to criticise 'Jane Eyre.' It has taken its place among the masterpieces of English literature. Of late, indeed, its popularity may have [illegible] eclipse in the universal celebrity of George Eliot's novels; but it was hardly necessary for Mr. Swinburne to have set his formidable spear in rest.

and made ready to tilt against all comers, on its behalf. There can be no real fear that it will ever be forgotten. Not as long, at all events, as men can appreciate a style clear, rich, picturesque and inimitably vigorous; a power of conceiving marked and irregular characters which is surely unique; and a rare faculty of faithful and vivid description. One of the tests of a good novel is its mastery over the reader's attention; and no one was ever able to put down 'Jane Eyre' half-read when he had once began it. Its interest is intense; its situations have a dramatic vivacity. Few finer passages of its kind can be found than the account of the fire at Thornfield; we see it as plainly as if it were put upon a stage.

In December, 1847, appeared 'Wuthering Heights,' by Emily Brontë, and 'Agnes Grey' by "sister Anne." The latter is good in itself, but suffers by contrast with the more powerful novel. Powerful, in very truth! For anything like the characters of Earnshaw and Heathcliff, we shall search English fiction in vain. They are painted with Titanic force; and it will to all time remain a wonder where the artist, a delicate young woman, living almost a recluse's life in the Yorkshire solitudes, gathered the materials for such

extraordinary creations. It may be said that they are ideal: if so, every detail is as consistent as if the portrait had been drawn from the living individual. That 'Wuthering Heights' is equal to 'Jane Eyre' we do not pretend; it is less complete; there is less variety and less truth of character; its scope is limited, and the author's genius seems exclusively confined to one or two types. But we venture to assert that that genius, had it had time for development, would have produced such fruit as the world of readers would have gladly treasured. It would have remained always an independent genius, disdaining to borrow—scorning almost to learn—from other intellects; and its work would have had that gift of immortal freshness which is given only to the work of a few original minds.

In Charlotte Brontë's life, as in the lives of most of us, many years were dark and dreary, but none were darker and dreariner, in spite of the recent success of 'Jane Eyre,' than 1848. It had opened pleasantly however. Charlotte and Agnes, whose second and last novel 'The Tenant of Wildfell Hall,' was in the press, making their first journey to London. They were very warmly welcomed by their publishers, Messrs. Smith and Elder, who, up to this time, had not cer-

tainly known whether Currer Bell was man or woman, whether the name was real or fictitious. But as the year grew, the shadow of a heavy sorrow fell upon the little parsonage. Branwell, the once brilliant and accomplished brother, sank rapidly into the grave which his own excesses had prepared. Suffering from frequent attacks of delirium, which alternated with terrible intervals of black despondency, he could not be left without continual watchers, and these could be no other than his father and sisters, who derived strength for the duty from the unselfishness of their love. The end came at last. In anticipation we dread it, whether for ourselves or others; yet it means *rest*, and to some how much of unspeakable happiness is in that rest! Here is Charlotte's record:—

"Branwell died, after twenty minutes' struggle, on Sunday morning, September 21st. He was perfectly conscious till the last agony came on. His mind had undergone the peculiar change which frequently precedes death, two days previously; the calm of better feeling filled it; a return of natural affection marked his last moments."

She adds:—

"He is in God's hands now; and the All-Powerful is likewise the All-Merciful. A deep conviction that he

re[illegible] at last [illegible] well after his brief, erring, [illegible] ing, feverish life—fills and quiets my mind now. [illegible] final separation, the spectacle of his pale corpse, gave me more acute, bitter pain, than I could have imagined. Till the last hour comes, we never know how much we can forgive, pity, regret a near relative. All his vices were and are nothing now. We remember [illegible] his woes."

True as this was, it is not the less certain that Branwell's death while it brought a sense of sorrow brought also a sense of relief. But Charlotte's [illegible] affliction had [illegible] mitigation. We gather [illegible] various hints [illegible] her correspondence and later [illegible] that it was the profoundest, the most deeply felt affliction of her life. Emily, more robust, now began [illegible] symptoms of the family's inherited weakness. With characteristic self-control she allowed as few [illegible] possible to escape. She would not acknowledge it to herself. She fought strenuously [illegible] compelled the failing limbs to do what they [illegible] in more vigorous days. [illegible] the Titan wrestling with [illegible] She could not and she would not submit. Weak as she might be, she refused [illegible] slightest [illegible] though tendered by loving hands

Day after day she persisted in accomplishing the stated task. Not from any dread of death, but because she would not own herself beaten. Even on the morning which proved to be the last she saw on earth, she rose as usual. As usual she dressed herself, though with many a pause which she resented, but, from physical debility, could not avoid. Then she took up her needle,— poor soul!—and sought to go on with the commonplace household-work,—while her sisters and servants looked on with wondering pain at this struggle between the frail humanity and the inevitable doom. About noon, however, the body triumphed over the mind, and constrained by a sudden yearning after help, she said to Charlotte, in a broken whisper,—"*Now*, if you will send for a doctor, I will see him." A tragic sentence, which it is difficult to read without tears. Ah, that "now"—it signifies so much! But doctors could do nothing. Boundless sisterly love could do nothing. About two o'clock the struggle was over; and was not the victory won?

In the letter from Charlotte, which we here transcribe, the depth of her anguish may be seen under all her assumed calmness:—

"Emily suffers no more from pain or weakness now. She will never suffer more in this world. She is gone,

after a hard, short conflict. She died on *Tuesday*, the very day I wrote to you. I thought it very possible she might be with us still for weeks; and a few hours afterwards, she was in eternity. Yes; there is no Emily in time or on earth now. Yesterday (December 20th), we put her poor, wasted, mortal frame quietly under the church pavement. We are very calm at present. Why should we be otherwise? The anguish of seeing her suffer is over; the spectacle of the pains of death is gone by; the funeral day is past. We feel she is at peace. No needs now to trouble for the hard frost and the keen wind. Emily does not feel them. She died in a time of promise. We saw her taken from life in its prime. But it is God's will, and the place where she is gone is better than that she has left.

"God has sustained me, in a way that I marvel at [illegible] as I had not conceived. I [illegible] at Anne, and wish she were well and strong; but [illegible] is papa. Could you now come [illegible] You will, I trust, find us tranquil [illegible] I never so much needed the [illegible] presence."

Charlotte [illegible] of grief was not yet complete. She had still [illegible] sister left, but it soon became

apparent that she, too, was to be taken away. It is probable that Anne's delicacy from her very childhood had become so familiar and constant a fact, as to blind the eyes of her family to the more dangerous symptoms that within the last few years had presented themselves. At least it seems to have been a terrible surprise, when, in March, 1849, the doctor pronounced her to be suffering from tubercular consumption. All was done that medical skill and affectionate solicitude could do to check the progress of the disease; but in vain. She was removed to Scarborough in the hope that she might derive some advantage from the sea-air. She arrived there on the 24th of May; she died on the 28th.

We quote one more letter of the surviving lonely sister's:—

"I got here [Haworth] a little before eight o'clock. All was clean and bright waiting for me. Papa and the servants were well; and all received me with an affection which should have consoled. The dogs seemed in strange ecstasy. I am certain they regarded me as the harbinger of others. The dumb creatures thought that as I was returned, those who had been so long absent were not far behind.

"I left papa soon, and went into the dining room.

I shut the door. I tried to be glad that I was [illegible] home. I have always been glad before—except [illegible] even then I was cheered. But this time joy was [illegible] to be the sensation. I felt that the house was [illegible] silent, the rooms were all empty. I remembered where the three were laid—in what narrow dark [illegible] ings—never more to reappear on earth. So the [illegible] of desolation and bitterness took posse[illegible] me. The agony that *was to be undergone*, and [illegible] to be avoided, came on. I underwent it, and passed a dreary evening and night, and a mournful [illegible] to-day I am better.

"I [illegible] know how life will pass, but I [illegible] [illegible] Him who [illegible] [illegible] may be cheered, and made endurable [illegible] [illegible] The great trial [illegible] [illegible] At that [illegible] [illegible] m—we used [illegible] [illegible] I am silent. I [illegible] [illegible] days, remember [illegible] [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] Perhaps all [illegible] [illegible]"

"M[illegible] later, [illegible] [illegible] when I was [illegible]

morning, and know that Solitude, Remembrance, and Longing are to be almost my sole companions all day through—that at night I shall go to bed with them—that they will long keep me sleepless—that next morning I shall wake to them again;—sometimes, Nell, I have a heavy heart of it. But crushed I am not, yet; nor robbed of elasticity, nor of hope, nor quite of endeavour. I have some strength to fight the battle of life. I am aware, and can acknowledge, I have many comforts, many mercies. Still I can *get on*. But I do hope and pray, that never may you, or any one I love, be placed as I am. To sit in a lonely room—the clock ticking loud through a still house—and have open before the mind's eye the record of the last year, with its shocks, sufferings, losses—is a trial."

IV.

We have thus seen what various influences were brought to bear on the intellectual development of Charlotte Brontë: the silent communion with Nature on the lonely moors; the strange home-experiences; the patient inquiry and reflection necessitated by a constant process of self-culture; the insight into life gained at the Brussels *pensionnat;* and, lastly, the teaching of bitter domestic sorrow. The effect of the last painful educator is plainly traceable in her second novel 'Shirley,' the third volume of which, commencing with the chapter entitled "The Valley of the Shadow of Death," was not begun until after the death of Anne. Into this book, much more than into 'Jane Eyre,' Charlotte Brontë seems to have put her heart. There [illegible] of herself than we find in 'Villette,' but there [illegible] of her affection for others. "Shirley [illegible], the heroine, is avowedly a presentment of

Emily Brontë; not, indeed, as she was, but as she would have been under the conditions imagined by the novelist. Evidently the portrait has been finished off by a tender and loving hand, anxious that not even the minutest detail should escape notice. The book as a whole is superior to 'Jane Eyre' in vigour of conception, in richness of colouring, and in healthiness of tone. The author has thrown off her morbidity, and has learned to restrain her genius. She deals more finely with scenes of passion, and avoids that over-frankness or want of reticence which some ill-natured critics called "coarseness," apparent now and then in the earlier novel. As for the pictures of scenery and action which crowd its pages, they are remarkable for their fidelity, their force, their animation. The characters are not less real. Mr. Helstone, the three curates, Mrs. Pryor, the Yorkes, and Moore,—these are living individuals, whom we should have no difficulty in recognising if we met them in the flesh.

'Shirley' was published on the 26th of October, and proved an immediate success. The reading world went wild about it, as well they might. The identity of the author could no longer be disguised; and she was invited to London by her admirers to receive the homage of Society. She was not fitted, however, to

play the part of a "lion." Her natural reserve had been intensified by her mode of life, and she shrunk from contact with strangers. Society, in particular, was disappointed; thought there was not much in her; and it was only in conversation with such men as Thackeray, Lewes, and Sydney Dobell, that she did herself justice, and drew upon her resources of thought and observation.

To one of her old Yorkshire friends she wrote as follows of her London visit [we quote from Mr. Wemyss Reid's interesting monograph]:—

"Ellen it seems" [Ellen is the original of Caroline Helstone in 'Shirley'] "told you that I spent a fortnight in London last December. They wished me very much to stay a month, alleging that I should in that time be able to secure a complete circle of acquaintance; but I found a fortnight of such excitement quite enough; the whole day was usually devoted to sight-seeing, and often the evening was spent in Society; it was more than I could bear for any length of time. On one occasion I met a party of my [illegible] of them. Some of them had been my [illegible] in print, but they were prodigiously civil [illegible] These gentlemen seemed infinitely [illegible] more pompous, dashing, showy, than the

few authors I saw. Mr. Thackeray, for example, is a man of very quiet simple demeanour; he is, however, looked upon with some awe and even distrust. His conversation is very peculiar, too perverse to be pleasant. It was proposed to me to see Charles Dickens, Lady Morgan, Mesdames Trollope, Gore, and some others; but I was aware these introductions would bring a degree of notoriety I was not disposed to encounter; I declined therefore with thanks. Nothing charmed me more during my stay in town than the pictures I saw; one or two private collections of Turner's best water-colours were indeed a treat. His later oil paintings are strange things—things that baffle description. I have twice seen Macready act, once in *Macbeth* and once in *Othello*. I astonished a dinner-party by honestly saying I did not like him. It is the fashion to rave about his splendid acting; anything more false and artificial, less genuinely impressive than his whole style, I could scarcely have imagined. The fact is the stage system altogether is hollow nonsense. They act farces well enough; the actors comprehend their parts and do them justice. They comprehend nothing about tragedy or Shakspeare, and it is a failure. I said so, and by so saying produced a blank silence, a mute

consternation. I was indeed obliged to dissent on many occasions, and to offend by dissenting. It seems now very much the custom to admire a certain wordy, intricate, obscure style of poetry, such as Elizabeth Barrett Browning writes."

It certainly augurs a defect in Charlotte Bronte's mental nature that she could not appreciate Mrs. Browning. But she was realistic to the core; and of the higher mysteries of life, as of the nobler aspects of humanity, she nowhere appears to take account. With unequalled force she describes what she herself saw and felt; but her range was somewhat limited, as was her experience. We see this in her three heroes; for there is a strong family likeness between the Rochester of 'Jane Eyre,' the "Moore" of 'Shirley,' and the Professor in 'Villette.'

In continuance:—

"I have, since you went, had a remarkable epistle from Thackeray, long, interesting, characteristic; but it and fortunately concludes with the strict injunction *Show this letter to no one.* Adding that if he thought his letters were seen by others, he should either cease to write, or write only what was conventional. Lest in this circumstance I should have sent it with the others. I answered it at length. Whether my

reply will give satisfaction or displeasure remains yet to be ascertained. . . .

"I believe I should have written to you before, but I don't know what heaviness of spirit has beset me of late, made my faculties dull, made rest wearisome, and occupation burdensome. Now and then the silence of the house, the solitude of the room, has pressed on me with a weight I found difficult to bear, and recollection has not failed to be as alert, poignant, obtrusive, as other feelings were languid. I attribute this state of things partly to the weather. Quicksilver invariably falls low in storms and high winds, and I have ere this been warned of approaching disturbance in the atmosphere by a sense of bodily weakness, and deep, heavy mental sadness, which some would call *presentiment*. Presentiment indeed it is, but not at all supernatural. The Haworth people have been making great fools of themselves about *Shirley*; they take it in the enthusiastic light. When they got the volumes at the Mechanics' Institution, all the members wanted them; they cast lots for the whole three, and whoever got a volume was only allowed to keep it two days, and to be fined a shilling *per diem* for longer detention. It would be mere nonsense and vanity to tell you what they say."

We have made these extracts because without them it would be impossible to present any just view of Charlotte Brontë as a woman; but her correspondence as published by Mrs. Gaskell and Mr. Wemyss Reid is easily accessible to the reader, and will be found worthy of careful study. There must be many letters of hers, however, still unpublished, such as her letters to Thackeray. It is to be hoped that some day, these will be given to the public.

It was about this time she made the acquaintance of Miss Martineau, who, in her 'Autobiography,' tells us that while staying at St. Leonards, in November 1850, she received a copy of 'Shirley,' and the following note:—

"Currer Bell offers a copy of 'Shirley' to Miss Martineau's acceptance, in acknowledgment of the pleasure and profit [illegible] he has derived from her works. When C. B. first read 'Deerbrook' he tasted a new and keen pleasure, and experienced a [illegible] benefit. In his mind, 'Deerbrook' ranks with the works that have really done him good. [illegible] ideas, and rectified his views in [illegible]."

Miss Martineau tells us that she and her friends

examined this note to make out whether it was written by a man or a woman. The hand was a cramped and nervous one, which might belong to any one who had written too much, or was in bad health, or had been indifferently taught. The matter at first seemed settled by the erased "she"; but it was suggested that the "she" might refer to Miss Martineau under a form of sentence which had been changed during the process of writing. Miss Martineau had already made up her mind that a certain passage in 'Jane Eyre,' about sewing on brass rings, could have been written only by a woman or an upholsterer; and while she addressed her reply externally to "Currer Bell, Esq.," she began it "Madame." She had greater reason for interest than even the deeply-interested public in knowing who wrote 'Jane Eyre'; for on its first appearance she had been taxed with the authorship by some, and by others charged with knowing the author, and having supplied some of the facts of the first volume from her own experience. She herself, when she read it, could not repress the conviction that it was written by some one of her friends who was acquainted with portions of her childish sufferings and sorrowings. Long afterwards "Currer Bell" told her that she had read with

wonder those parts of 'Household Education' which related her early experience. It was like meeting her own *fetch*; the fears and miseries there described corresponded so exactly to her own, told or not told in 'Jane Eyre.'

A month later, during Charlotte Brontë's visit to London, she sent to Miss Martineau suggesting an interview. The suggestion was gladly accepted; and it was arranged that the author of 'Shirley' should call on the author of 'Deerbrook' at six o'clock on a certain Tuesday evening. What followed is best told in Miss Martineau's language:—

"We were in a certain state of excitement all day and especially towards evening. The footman would certainly announce this mysterious personage by his or her right name; and, as I could not hear the announcement, I charged my cousins to take care that I was duly informed of it. A little before six there was a thundering rap:—the drawing-room door was thrown open, and in stalked a gentleman six feet high. It was not "Currer," but a philanthropist [illegible] about a model lodging house. [illegible] I, for one, wished him away, and [illegible] anybody else came. Precisely as the

time-piece struck six, a carriage stopped at the door; and after a minute of suspense, the footman announced 'Miss Brogden'; whereupon my cousin informed me that it was Miss Brontë; for we had heard the name before, among others, in the way of conjecture. I thought her the smallest creature I had ever seen [except at a fair], and her eyes blazed, as it seemed to me. She glanced quickly round; and my trumpet pointing me out, she held out her hand frankly and pleasantly. I introduced her, of course, to the family; and then came a movement which I had not anticipated. When she was seated by me on the sofa, she cast up at me such a look,—so loving, so appealing,—that, in connection with her deep mourning dress, and the knowledge that she was the sole survivor of her family, I could with the utmost difficulty return her smile, or keep my composure. I should have been heartily glad to cry. We soon got on very well; and she appeared more at her ease that evening than I ever saw her afterwards, except when we were alone. My hostess was so considerate as to leave us together after tea, in case of C. B. desiring to have private conversation with me. She was glad of the opportunity to consult me about certain strictures of the reviewers which she did not understand, and had every desire to profit by.

I did not suppose the point of these structures [illegible] thought them not entirely groundless."

The reader, we would again say, must [illegible] the belief that there was something morbid [illegible] Brontë's temperament. Her physical weakness [illegible] the utter loneliness [illegible] her genius was naturally [illegible] dependency or restlessness. Her judgment was [illegible], her intellect [illegible] imaginative [illegible]. In these are passages [illegible] which [illegible] with the [illegible] [illegible] Written by a [illegible] Brontë [illegible] will allow greater [illegible] to the [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] the visit to London, [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

autumn she began the best of her glorious triad of novels—'Villette.' According to Mr. Wemyss Reid, this latest-born of her genius was brought forth with travail so bitter that more than once she was tempted to lay aside her pen and hush her voice for ever. "Every sentence," he says, "was wrung from her as though it had been a drop of blood, and the book was built up, bit by bit, amid paroxysms of positive anguish, occasioned in part by her own physical weakness and suffering, but still more by the torture through which her mind passed as she depicted scene after scene from the darkest chapter in her own life for the benefit of those for whom she wrote. It is from her letters that at this time also we get the best indications of what she was passing through. Few, perhaps, reading those letters, would suppose that their writer was at that very time engaged in the production of a great masterpiece, destined to hold its own among the ripest and finest fruits of English genius." A masterpiece, unquestionably; but rather as an autobiography than as a work of fiction. Its realism is too intense for true art. "Lucy Snowe" may not be Charlotte Brontë; but she speaks Charlotte Brontë's thoughts and sees with Charlotte Brontë's eyes. The transcript is so true as to be painful. We seem to look upon

the agony of real flesh and blood; and cannot [illegible] ourselves with the belief that it is the fictitious [illegible] of a fictitious character. It is not the novelist [illegible] addresses us, but the woman behind the novelist, [illegible] not always in her healthiest mood.

'Villette' was finished in November. Its end [illegible] not exactly the end which the writer intended. [illegible] most people know, she altered it to gratify her father. She had determined that Lucy Snowe should not [illegible] Paul Emanuel, but should be left to an old age [illegible] solitude, with no bright sunshine of love upon [illegible] hope of happiness on this side of the dark river. [illegible] think her father was right in desiring a felicitous [illegible] The darkness of the book required some such [illegible] And its present doubtful conclusion is better than [illegible] original idea, because it leaves something open [illegible] [illegible] imagination.* It is stated to have been [illegible]

* [illegible]

[illegible] the days shorten, the leaves [illegible]

[illegible]

author's "fixed conviction" that it was her best work, the work by which her reputation must stand or fall. Authors, we know, are not the wisest judges of their productions; and Charlotte Brontë was mistaken, we think, in this estimate. In matters of criticism taste has, perhaps, as strong an influence as judgment; at all events, we regard 'Shirley' as the finest, healthiest, and most artistic of Charlotte Brontë's novels. But there can be no dispute as to the immediate success

the clouds cast themselves into strange forms—arches and broad radiations; there rise resplendent mornings—glorious, royal-purple, as a monarch in his state; the heavens are one aflame; so wild are they, they rival battle at its thickest—so bloody, they shame Victory in her pride. I know some signs of the sky; I have noted them ever since childhood. God, watch that sail! Oh! guard it!

"The wind shifts to the west. Peace, peace, Banshee, 'keening' at every window! It will rise—it will swell—it shrieks out long: wander as I may through the house this night, I cannot lull the blast. The advancing hours make it strong; by midnight, all sleepless watchers hear and fear a wild south-west storm . . .

"Peace, be still! Oh! a thousand weepers, praying in agony on wailing shores, listened for that voice, but it was not uttered—not uttered till, when the hush came, some could not feel it; till, when the sun returned, his light was night to some!"

of 'Villette,' and this, particularly, with the cr
though all may not agree with Wemyss Reid tha
author "out of the dull record of humble woes, ma
by no startling episodes, adorned by few of the fic
of poetry, created such a heart-history as rem
to this day without a rival in the school of En
fiction to which it belongs,"

V.

We shall pass rapidly over the closing years of Charlotte Brontë's life. With the publication of 'Villette' her literary career ended.

In December, 1852, she received a proposal of marriage from Mr. Nicholls, who for several years had lived the life of a Christian gentleman at Haworth as her father's curate; who had had ample opportunities of knowing her as she really was; and whose affection had deepened and strengthened with his knowledge. She was wholly unconscious of his attachment, and its declaration came upon her at first as a great, but not altogether painful surprise. It was not that she had not had other offers of marriage; but never before had the offer been one based on a chivalrous devotion to the woman. She thus found herself called out of the lonely and sad life to which she had doomed her

prototype, Lucy Snowe, to a life consecrated by true affection. She was not disposed to put aside or undervalue the blessing that had come upon her. Instead of loneliness, pleasant companionship; instead of mistrust or misrepresentation, perfect sympathy. Before she would allow herself to accept it, however, she went to her father. Mr. Brontë's bitterness of character seemed to revive under the influence of the revelation. Whether it was jealousy, or pride, or dissatisfied ambition,—whatever the motive,—he burst into a passion of indignation, and insisted that Mr. Nicholls should receive an immediate refusal. His daughter complied, she felt it to be her duty to sacrifice herself to her father's will; but it was a *sacrifice*. Mr. Nicholls resigned the curacy he had held so long, and prepared to leave the place associated now with so dreary a disappointment. Charlotte, meanwhile, suffered deeply, but did not waver in the line of conduct forced upon her. To gain some slight relief, she went on a visit to London; and afterwards to Mrs. Gaskell, the novelist, and her future biographer, at Manchester. Thence she returned home to her grief. And here we must quote one more letter, not only because it reveals the depth of her feelings, but because it touches on the cause of the estrangement between Miss Martineau

and herself. It was written on the 13th of April, 1853:—

"Your last kind letter ought to have been answered long since, and would have been, did I find it practicable to proportion the promptitude of the response to the value I place upon my correspondents and their communications. You will easily understand, however, that the contrary rule often holds good, and that the epistle which importunes often takes precedence of that which interests. My publishers express entire satisfaction with the reception which has been accorded to *Villette*. And, indeed, the majority of the reviews has been favourable enough. You will be aware, however, that there is a minority, small in character, which views the work with no favourable eye. Currer Bell's remarks on Romanism have drawn down on him the condign displeasure of the High Church party, which displeasure has been unequivocally expressed through their principal organs, the *Guardian*, the *English Churchman*, and the *Christian Remembrancer*. I can well understand that some of the charges launched against me by these publications will tell heavily to my prejudice in the minds of most readers. But this must be borne; and for my part,

I can suffer no accusation to oppress me much which is not supported by the inward evidence of Conscience and Reason. 'Extremes meet,' says the proverb in proof whereof I would mention that Miss Martineau finds with *Villette* nearly the same faults as the Puseyites. She accuses me of attacking Popery 'with virulence,' of going out of my way to assault it 'passionately.' In other respects she has shown, with reference to the work, a spirit so strangely and unexpectedly acrimonious, that I have gathered courage to tell her that the gulf of mutual difference between her and me is so wide and deep, the bridge of [illegible] so slight and uncertain, I have come to the conclusion that frequent intercourse would be most perilous and unadvisable, and have begged to adjourn our [illegible] prospected visit to her. Of course she is [illegible] but it cannot be helped."

[illegible] Mr. Brontë persisted in his antagonism to Mr. Nicholls; but it gave way at last before [illegible] evident ill-health. He begged her to [illegible] Mr. Nicholls, who had tended to obey the summons, [illegible] the marriage took place. [illegible] peace and contentment followed [illegible] new duties, attracted by new

objects, laid aside her pen almost entirely; and as Mr. Nicholls sympathized but little with literary effort, cheerfully repressed "the gift" which had for so many years been to her a pleasure and a pain. That she would always have been able to stifle the impulses of her genius we can hardly believe; but before she could reconcile its claims with those of her wifely duties she was called away, following her sisters to what may well be called a premature grave. She was taken ill in January, 1855, but at first the symptoms were not alarming, and her husband and friends hoped she was suffering from only a temporary indisposition. It was seen, however, that they did not abate. Gradually she grew weaker; soon so weak that she was compelled to take to her bed; and a terrible alarm filled the hearts of both husband and father. In an interval of rest from the delirium and nausea that enfeebled her, she whispered in her husband's ear, "Oh! I am not going to die, am I? He will not separate us;—we have been so happy." But the separation came; and on Saturday morning, March 31st, the melancholy chime of the Haworth bells announced that Charlotte Brontë was no more. She died, leaving a name that all English-speaking nations will respect; and the memory

of one who, as Miss Martineau wrote, was, in very truth, endowed with "the deep intuitions of a gifted woman, the strength of a man, the patience of a hero, and the conscientiousness of a saint."

HARRIET MARTINEAU.

A.D. 1802–1876.

I.

HARRIET MARTINEAU, as all will admit, was a remarkable woman; remarkable by virtue of her mental endowments; remarkable for force of character; remarkable in her long and active career; and remarkable in her ready acceptance of the crude speculations of an inferior mind; but remarkable, beyond everything, for her egotism. This egotism reached positively sublime proportions. It led her not only to believe that she had controlled the will of statesmen, influenced the councils of ministries, and directed the currents of popular opinion, but to pronounce judgment with a complacency that nothing could disturb on the most illustrious of her contemporaries. In its reflected light, moreover, she saw those who belonged to her, surrounded her, or were admitted to her friendship. It inspired her to be

as lavish of undeserved praise as of indiscriminate censure. It was a good thing to be admitted within her circle; to be outside of it was to be nowhere. Never was there a woman who had so firm a belief in herself; in this, as in other respects, she was truly representative of the happily limited class of female reformers who think the world is out of joint, and that they are born to set it right. It is seldom, we opine, that so colossal a self-assertion is allied to such intellectual lucidity. Harriet Martineau could see everybody's weaknesses but her own. On the other hand, it is seldom that so tremendous an egotism is co-existent with so bounteous a temperament. She was happy-natured, and succeeded in securing the happiness of those about her. One who knew her well avers that all her servants and junior relatives were devoted to her. To be sure, this may have been partly due to the fact that they were her dependants and inferiors, and never came in the way of her prejudices or partialities. But, after making this allowance, we must still ascribe a good deal of [illegible] to the element of geniality in her [illegible].

[illegible] Martineau, as W. K. Greg [illegible] *Quelle avait le défaut de ses qualités.* Her

mental and moral gifts were many and brilliant, and she could hardly possess them in such measure without the analogous errors, whether of excess or deficiency, which usually detract from their value and injure their usefulness. She could hardly have done what admittedly she did do but for her severe and unwavering dogmatism. The first condition for carrying conviction to others is, that your own conviction should be as fixed as the law of the Medes and Persians. The principles of political economy which she enforced so eloquently were accepted all the more readily by her readers because it was evident that she herself had no doubt of their truth. But this dogmatism became offensive when applied to all subjects; and even ridiculous when it was exercised against all religious systems. People could no longer acquiesce when they found Harriet Martineau delivering her verdict against Christianity as composedly as against the Corn Laws. The thought occurred to *them*, though it did not occur to *her*, that she might be mistaken. Much more truly of Harriet Martineau than of Macaulay might it be said that she was "cocksure of everything." Misgiving, to quote Mr. Greg, seems to have been a sensation that was alien to her constitution. This self-sufficiency,

unaccompanied by her great powers of intellect, would, of course, have been grotesque and offensive; as it was, the world found it very hard to bear.

The best defence of it that we can find has been made by Mr. Greg. He speaks of her marvellous productiveness, and the unequalled rapidity with which she turned out her admirable stories, as tending to cultivate her self-confidence to an extravagant degree. "No one who worked as quickly or so hard ever worked as well. It seemed almost—quite so to herself—'as if it were given her in that same hour what she should say.' There was no long brooding, no meditation, no slow process of hatching inchoate germs, no painful collections of ample and carefully sorted materials; the plan and the table of contents of her books, as it were, flashed upon her like the inspirations of a poet; the executive efficiency of her intellectual power was absolutely unrivalled; her style was [illegible] from the outset, clear, lucid, vigorous, [illegible], without trace of effort, and never, so far as we remember, betraying the faintest lapse into [illegible] ambitious writing which are the [illegible] of youth."

This eulogy seems to us excessive; but let us see

the use which Mr. Greg makes of it. He thinks that considering such extraordinary powers, her consciousness of abounding energy, the suddenness and completeness of her success, and the fame and adulation with which she was surrounded in times of great excitement and amid circles of dazzling brilliancy, her self-confidence, however regrettable, was not only natural, but its absence would have been miraculous. The truth is, he adds, that doubt seems to have been a state of mind unknown to her. "She never *reconsidered* her opinions, or mused over her judgments. They were instantaneous insights, not deliberate or gradual deductions. It scarcely seemed to occur to her that she *could* be wrong; that thousands of eminent or wise men differed from her never appeared to suggest the probability." Accepting this defence, we are forced to say that it invalidates to a very considerable extent the preceding praise. The intellect might have been clear which pronounced so dictatorially; the transcendent egotism might have been, as it was, accompanied by vast energy, great capacity for work, and never-failing readiness; but the *higher* genius was indisputably wanting. There was talent—plenty of it—brisk, active, ready, fertile talent, but nothing more. We can conceive of

no such self-confidence as blinding the genius of Shakspeare, or Newton, or Goethe; for the self-confidence of Harriet Martineau took away from the merit of every person but herself, resolved the world into a something which floated round her own individuality, and was as ready to blot God out of Heaven as to depose Satan from the throne of Hell. And, after all, where is the result of the tremendous powers that are claimed for her? How much of her work will live? Her children's tales, perhaps, her 'Deerbrook,' and her book of Eastern Travels; and these are hardly the best of their kind. There is nothing in her book on Egypt so brilliant as the descriptions in 'Eothen'; while as a novelist she cannot be ranked with George Eliot, Charlotte Brontë, or even Mrs. Gaskell. Her strength lay in logical force of statement and appositeness of illustration, [illegible] that she succeeded so well as a leader-writer. And her Political Economy tales are "leaders" [illegible] the form of fiction. We concede [illegible] narrative power, and that [illegible] always interesting. But she [illegible] insight into character; and the [illegible] novels are mostly automata.

contrived for the purpose of letting their author move them and speak through them.

In briefly sketching the life of Harriet Martineau, we shall of course draw largely upon her 'Autobiography,' which terminates, however, about twenty years before her death. It is in its way as remarkable as its author. As a piece of mental analysis, it is unique. No one can doubt its honesty, or that it faithfully represents its author's mind. We are not inclined to blame it because it is so full of that author; though it is amusing to perceive the evident belief that the reader will dwell as eagerly as she herself dwelt upon even the minutest particulars of her childhood. But we could wish it had been more generous in tone; that the egotism had indulged less in depreciation of others; and that it did not quite so clearly demonstrate Miss Martineau's belief, that the world's eye was always fixed upon her, and that she played a very important part in the world's doings.

Harriet Martineau was born in 1802. She was the daughter of a respectable Norwich manufacturer, who, though of Huguenot descent, belonged to the Unitarian denomination. We derive no very distinct

impression of her father from the record she has compiled; but the mother, it is plain, was a clever, restless, dogmatic person, securely confident in her own wisdom. She was hardly happy in her parents; they did little to guide her, and nothing at all to cultivate her affections. She says that only twice in her early childhood did she experience any manifestation of tenderness; once when she was suffering from earache, and her parents were moved to compassion; once from a kind-hearted lady who witnessed her alarm at a magic-lantern exhibition. It is no marvel if the seeds of some evil were sown in so loveless a childhood.

She was the sixth of a family of eight; and apparently was selected to enjoy the special benefit of the severest maternal discipline. Her sensitiveness appears to have been excessive; but was not understood, or at least not taken account of. She tells us that she does not think her parents ever had the slight [illegible] of her miseries; and as she never [illegible] them, it is difficult to see how they [illegible] [illegible] [illegible], if they were all of the [illegible] [illegible] she described. She owns that her [illegible] unaccountable, a matter of pure [illegible] any intellectual justification what

ever, even of the wildest kind. Take an instance:—"A magic-lantern was exhibited to us on Christmas Day, and once or twice in the year besides. I used to see it cleaned by daylight, and to handle all its parts, understanding its whole structure; yet, such was my terror of the white circle on the wall, and of the moving slides, that, to speak the plain truth, the first apparition always brought on bowel complaint; and, at the age of thirteen, when I was pretending to take care of little children during the exhibition, I could never look at it without having the back of a chair to grasp, or hurting myself, to carry off the intolerable sensation." Obviously, no parents could provide against the freaks of so impressionable a temperament, except by attending to the bodily health, which was evidently its cause.

Much care was taken of the education of the little Martineaus. They learned French and music thoroughly; were made excellent housewives and needlewomen; and were sent to a good school, where they attained to such classical proficiency that they could make Latin hexameters, as so many can do, and think in Latin, as so few can do. Harriet's master was a scholar, and apparently recognised the good promise of his odd, clever, and deaf little pupil. She

took a great delight in reading; and, of course, like all active minds, read omnivorously, with a special preference for history, poetry, and politics. She says of herself that her mind was desperately methodical; and without method true educational progress is impossible. The Duke of Wellington asserted that there were not two generals in England who, having got ten thousand men in Hyde Park, could get them out again. We have known very few boys or girls who, having got a number of facts into their head, knew what to do with them, or how to arrange them so as to have them ready when wanted. We do not recommend, however, Miss Martineau's excessive proneness to systematizing:—

"Everything," she says, "must be made tabular that would at all admit of it. Thus, I adopted in an immense hurry Dr. Franklin's youthful and absurd plan of pricking down his day's virtues and vices under heads. I found at once the difficulty of mapping out moral qualities, and had to give it up,—as I presume he had too. But I tried after something quite as foolish, and with immense perseverance. I thought it would be a fine thing to distribute Scripture instructions under the heads of the virtues and vices, so as to have encouragement or

rebuke always ready at hand. So I made (as on so many other occasions) a paper book, ruled and duly headed. With the Old Testament I got on very well; but I was annoyed at the difficulty with the New. I knew it to be of so much more value and importance than the Old, that I could not account for the small number of cut and dry commands. I twisted meanings and wordings, and made figurative things into precepts, before I would give up; but after rivalling any old Puritan preacher in my free use of Scripture, I was obliged to own that I could not construct the system I wanted."

Religious truth was an object of early interest to her inquisitive mind. Bred up in an atmosphere of illogical Unitarianism, she groped her way painfully towards the light, but never found it. Up to the age of twenty her creed was simply this:—She believed in a God milder and more beneficent and passionless than the God of the orthodox, inasmuch as He would not doom any of His creatures to everlasting torment. She did not at any time believe in the Devil, but regarded him as an allegorical personification of Sin, while she thought eternal punishment stood for eternal detriment. She believed in inestimable and eternal rewards of holiness, though never in her life,

she says, did she do a right thing or abstain [illegible] wrong one through any consideration of [illegible] To the best of her recollection, she always [illegible] and remorse extremely, but punishment [illegible] mental analysis made in mature womanhood [illegible] however, on many points of childish [illegible] belief. But it is quite possible that, as she [illegible] doctrine of forgiveness or repentance never [illegible] much. Probably it was presented to her [illegible] doctrinal dogma, an article of the theological [illegible] than as a living truth. [illegible]

could not be true she does not deign to inform the reader. She adhered to the former, she says, after St. Paul; as if St. Paul did not believe in the soul's everlasting life.

It must in justice be said that she struggled after light. She prayed "night and morning" until she was of mature age; but then she did not pray with any faith in a personal Saviour, any belief that Jesus the Son of Man was also the Son of God. She studied the Bible incessantly and immensely; both by daily reading of chapters, after "the approved but mischievous method," and by getting hold of all commentaries and works of elucidation that she could lay her hands on. She got hold of the works of Dugald Stewart, of Hartley, and Priestley, plunged boldly into the maze of metaphysics, and sought to grapple with the mysterious questions of fore-knowledge and free-will. Having no other guide than her own self-reliant intellect, it is no wonder that she became a Necessarian, and adopted firmly the conviction of the invariable action of fixed laws. The effect upon her theological system could not be otherwise than powerful. She presently perceived, and took instant advantage of the discovery—one which was strangely left for her to make!—that the practice of prayer, as prevailing throughout Christendom, is wholly unau-

thorised by the New Testament! How she arrived at this "discovery" she does not tell us, and we cannot guess; for to the apprehension of the Christian the very reverse is true. But her idea of Christian prayer must have been vague, indeed, since she thought of it as answering precisely to the description of that Pharisaic prayer which Christ reprobated! We need not be surprised that, having made this discovery, she changed her own method; gradually, perhaps, but beginning immediately and decidedly. "Not knowing what was good for me, and being sure that every external thing would come to pass just the same, whether I liked it or not, I ceased to desire, and therefore to pray for, anything external,—whether 'daily bread,' or health, or life for myself or others, or anything whatever but spiritual good. Then I for a long time drew the line. Many years after I had outgrown the childishness of wishing for I knew not what,—of praying for what might either be good or evil, I continued to pray for spiritual benefits. I can hardly say for spiritual aid; for I took the necessarian view of even the higher form of prayer,—that it brought about, or [illegible] about, its own accomplishment by the [illegible] which it excited and cherished [illegible] from simple, and so irreconcilable

with the view of a revelation of a scheme of salvation, that it is clear that the one or the other view must soon give way." In Miss Martineau's case, unfortunately, both gave way; and we hope it is not uncharitable to assert that she never knew the *Christian* view either of prayer or of the "scheme of salvation."

Her singular egotism and her sense of superiority to all ordinary practices and opinions, are shown in the following passage, based, we need hardly say, on a curious misunderstanding of the meaning and spirit alike of prayer and praise:—

"What I could not desire for myself, I could not think of stipulating for for others; and thus, in regard to petition, my prayers became simply an aspiration,—'Thy will be done!' But still, the department of praise remained. I need hardly say that I soon drew back in shame from offering to a Divine being a homage which would be offensive to an earthly one; and when this practice was over, my devotions consisted in aspiration,—very frequent and heartfelt,—under all circumstances and influences, and much as I meditate now, almost hourly, on the mysteries of life and the universe, and the great science and art of human duty. In proportion as the taint of fear and desire and self-regard fell off, and the meditation had fact instead of

passion for its subject, the aspiration became freer and sweeter, till at length, when the selfish superstition had wholly gone out of it, it spread its charm through every change of every waking hour,—and does now, when life itself is expiring." A *selfish superstition!* Such is the term which Harriet Martineau applies to the faith that has been accepted by thousands of minds not less gifted, many, indeed, more richly gifted, than her own; that has consoled the hearts of innumerable men and women, not less pure than herself, not less conscious of aspirations free and sweet! But her argument is vitiated by one great flaw. No analogy can justly be drawn between the Most High God of the Christian creed and a feeble, erring, earthly sovereign; nor between the worship, reverend and loving, offered on the altar of the Divine and the adulation or flattery heaped at the feet of the Human. Nor does she seem to understand that the heart is purified and made better by indulging in admiration for what is great and good.

It is right, perhaps, to conceive of Harriet Martineau [illegible] and aspiring after a lofty ideal during her [illegible] childhood; and in strange [illegible] reflections finding that comfort [illegible] have been, but was not provided by a

mother's love. As she grew older, and grew stronger both in mind and body, she grew bolder; aspiration gave way to self-satisfied conviction. The morbid self-reproach was replaced by an extravagant self-consciousness, and thenceforth she went on her way, acting up always to a high standard of rectitude, but putting aside the faiths, the hopes, the judgments of the many as baubles beneath the notice of a mature and well-balanced intellect.

The death of her father having involved the family in the discomfort of narrow circumstances, Miss Martineau endeavoured to secure an independent livelihood by the use of her pen. She had already, before her father's death, prepared and published a little volume of 'Devotional Exercises,' but this had been confined in its circulation to a very limited public. She now bethought herself of the employment of fiction as a vehicle for the exposition and popularisation of the great principles of social and political economy. The idea was a new and a happy one; and could hardly have been realized at a more opportune time, for in the reign of George IV. the English public was beginning to awaken from its long political torpor, and to assert its rights against the dominant class-interests. It was desirable that its action should be

guided by an intelligent apprehension of the cardinal truths by which reform is differentiated from revolution. To these truths, presented in the stereotyped form of dull treatises and elaborate manuals, the public would have yielded no attention. It was necessary to appeal to its convictions through the imagination and the feelings, and such was Miss Martineau's design. She accordingly wrote the tale of 'The Rioters',—but then came the difficulty of securing a publisher. In her 'Autobiography' she records in a graphic and amusing narrative her struggles, her disappointments, her interviews, her communications, her alternations of hope and fear. But she was determined to gain a hearing. The publishers told her that the cholera and the Reform Bill had effectually preoccupied the public mind. She did not believe it. She believed that, on the contrary, the agitation thus created was favourable to her hopes, that there was everywhere a readiness to [illegible] by the existence of grave evils in the body [illegible] and apply their remedies. At last [illegible] 'The Rioters' was published, and its [illegible] Ten days after its appearance [illegible] to the publisher, with a copy of the [illegible] made with all speed any [illegible] as he had nearly sold out

the first edition. He added that the demand led him to propose to print 2000. A postscript stated that since the foregoing was written he had found that 3000 would be wanted. A second postscript proposed 4000, and a third, 5000. The press was unanimous in approval; daily, weekly, and monthly papers all joined in a chorus of cordial praise. The Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, which had previously regarded the proposed series with little favour, now wanted it at any price; and Mr. Joseph Hume, *facile princeps* of parliamentary economists, was equally liberal on behalf of a new Society, over which he presided. Members of Parliament sent down shoals of blue-books to Miss Martineau's quiet rural residence; and her correspondence assumed such gigantic proportions as to startle the bucolic mind. Half the hobbies of the House of Commons, and countless hobbies of private individuals, were recommended to her for treatment in her series, most of them having no connection at all with its plan or purpose. The successful authoress found it requisite to remove to London, where she settled in a house in Fludyer Street, Westminster; and resolutely entered on that literary career which brought to her an ample independence, and gave her a definite position among the female writers of England.

Her Tales of Political Economy were issued once a month, and the series comprises eighteen. She gives a very interesting description of the system she followed in their construction:—

"I furnished myself," she says, "with all the standard works on the subject of what I then took to be a science. I had made a skeleton plan of the course, comprehending the four divisions—Production, Distribution, Exchange, and Consumption; and, in order to save my nerves from being overwhelmed with the thought of what I had undertaken, I resolved not to look beyond the department on which I was engaged. The subdivisions arranged themselves as naturally as the primary ones, and when my subject was episodical (as Slave Labour) I announced it as such. Having noted my own leading ideas on the subject before me, I took down my books and read the treatment of that particular subject in each of them, making notes of reference on a separate sheet for each book, and restraining myself from glancing even in thought towards the scene and nature of my story, that it should be suggested by my collective didactic material. It was about a morning's work to gather hints by the reading. The next process, occupying an evening, when I had one to spare, or the next

morning, was making the Summary of Principles which is found at the end of each number. This was the most laborious part of the work, and that which I certainly considered the most valuable.

"The next process was to embody each leading principle in a character, and the mutual operation of these embodied principles supplied the action of the story. It was necessary to have some accessories,—some outworks to the scientific erection; but I limited these as much as possible; and I believe that in every instance they really were rendered subordinate. An hour or two sufficed for the outline of my story. If the scene was foreign, or in any part of England with which I was not familiar, I sent to the library for books of travel or topography, and the collecting and noting down hints from these finished the second day's work. The third day's toil was the severest. I reduced my material to chapters, making a copious table of contents for each chapter on a separate sheet, on which I noted down, not only the action of the personages and the features of the scene, but all the political economy which it was their business to convey, whether by exemplification or conversation,—so as to absorb all the materials provided. This was not always completed at one sitting, and it made me

sometimes sick with fatigue; but it was usually done in one day. After that, all the rest was easy. I paged my paper; and then the story went off like a letter. I never could decide whether I most enjoyed writing the descriptions, the narrative, or the argumentative or expository conversations. I liked each best while I was about it."

As to the daily work done, it averaged twelve pages a day, each page containing thirty-three lines.

It is obvious that fiction composed on this elaborate system would often be deficient in spontaneity, and in several of the Tales the didactic element is disagreeably prominent. The characters, moreover, are, as might be expected, too frequently mere lay-figures, constructed for the sole purpose of being decked out with their maker's opinions. Too frequently they are positively unnatural, and therefore inartistic; and their sayings and doings are utterly inconsistent with the conditions [illegible] upon them. In fact, Miss Martineau had little power of characterization. She could construct [illegible] matter, but she could not represent [illegible] men. Her great *forte* was descrip- [illegible] always so vivid and picturesque as [illegible] exactitudeness of the improba- [illegible] story, and the inconsistencies of the

dramatis personæ. In 'Ella of Gareloch,' for instance, we are so carried along by the animation of the language and the beauty of the pictures, that we do not stop to think of the absurdity of a Scottish fishwife uttering Malthusian views on the population question. This, however, is one of the best of the series. Equal in merit seems to us 'Life in the Wilds,' and 'The Hamlets.' Miss Martineau is always most successful, because most spontaneous, when on English ground; she wrote then from experience and actual knowledge rather than from the data laboriously accumulated by a comparison of authorities. The tales in which the scenes and characters are foreign smell of the lamp; and the defect of excessive elaboration is as apparent in them as in her later novel—an apotheosis of Toussaint l'Ouverture—'The Hour and the Man.'

But we have somewhat anticipated the order of events. Chronological accuracy requires a particularisation of dates. Her 'Illustrations of Political Economy' may be considered to include the tales dealing with the Poor Laws and Pauperism, 1833-1834, and Taxation, 1834. Roughly speaking, they extended over a period of three or four years, unless we go back to 'The Rioters' in 1826, and 'The

Turn-Out' in 1827. In 1830 she had published some ideal sketches of life and nature in the Holy Land at the time of the Coming of Our Lord, under the title of 'Traditions of Palestine;' and we think it was in the same year that some prizes offered by the British and Foreign Unitarian Association for essays on the best mode of extending an Unitarian propaganda, fell to her pen.

Her long and brilliant series of tales with a purpose gained her a very wide reputation and considerable influence, though it is by no means necessary to suppose that they raised her to such a position of pre-eminence as she describes in her 'Autobiography.' She seems to think that her views were all-powerful with Cabinets as with the nation, and that she really controlled the course of legislation. She records with the utmost gravity and good [illegible] the following incidents in connection with her Tales on the Poor Laws:—

'Lord Brougham sent me all the evidence as it was [illegible] by the Commissioners of Inquiry [illegible] the operation of the Poor Laws. There can be [illegible] the strength of this evidence [illegible] questions to which it gave [illegible] were then intent on [illegible] requested to furnish my share [illegible]

conclusions and suggestions. I did so in the form of a programme of doctrine for my illustrations, some of which expose the evils of the old system, while others pourtray the features of its proposed successor. My document actually crossed in the street was sent me by a Member of the Government detailing the heads of the new [Poor Law] Bill. I sat down to read it with no little emotion, and some apprehension; and the moment when, arriving at the end, I found that the Government scheme and my own were identical, point by point, was one not to be easily forgotten. I never wrote anything with more glee than 'The Hamlets'—the number in which the proposed reform is exemplified: and the spirit of the work carried me through the great effort of writing that number and 'Cinnamon and Pearls' in one month, — during a country visit in glorious summer weather."

An authoress with Miss Martineau's view of her influence and confidence in her genius was sure to wage war with the critics. It mattered little whether it was *The Times* or *The Quarterly Review*, or some obscure organ of opinion; if it found fault it was denounced as ignorant, corrupt, malignant, and prejudiced. Her want of humour made her see hostility where only a little banter was intended. It was the

same in her dealings with Society. She wanted every body to make the first advances; and even when this was done, seems to have been dissatisfied, and to have denounced the cordial welcome extended to her as an attempt at "lionism." Her great complaint appears to have been that people persisted in regarding her as a literary celebrity; and yet that was her very claim to distinction. She would like to know, she writes, whether it is quite necessary, in generous and Christian England, that any class should submit to have its most besetting sin, its peculiar weakness, fostered and aggravated for the purposes of persons whose view it is to have brilliant parties and a celebrated acquaintance. This, surely, is both ungracious and ungrateful. The distinguished men and women who sought the acquaintance of Miss Martineau as a woman of genius were under no necessity of resorting to literary lions to make their parties "brilliant." It is quite certain that they claimed her intimacy with no such object and that the words of kindness and eulogy they [illegible] her were never intended as the expression [illegible] flattery. In this depreciation [illegible] in the irritation she felt at a [illegible] we see the [illegible] professed to be superior to vanity

and in her boasted self-knowledge was really ignorant of a cardinal weakness of her character. She writes that after her return from America she was invited to every kind of party at Lansdowne House—a concert, a state dinner, a friendly dinner party, a small evening party, and a ball; and she, with the mistaken pride of a Diogenes, declined them all. Why? She would go nowhere except where her acquaintance was sought, as a lady, by ladies. Mr. Hallam told her,—what was true enough,—that Lady Lansdowne, being one of the Queen's ladies, and Lord Lansdowne, being a Cabinet Minister, could not make calls. If so, she says, it made no difference in her disinclination to go, in a blue-stocking way, to a house where she was not really acquainted with anybody. Mr. Hallam thought her (she said) conceited and saucy; but she felt she must take her own—very objectionable—methods of preserving her social independence. Independence! why, it was the veriest arrogance! And how paltry a feeling it was, after all! Of course she was sought because her abilities had raised her above the crowd; and she should have accepted the homage paid to her intellectual power instead of insisting on being brought down to the level of ordinary womanhood. To us, her pride seems to have been miserably misdirected.

Lord Lansdowne, she adds, would not give the matter up. Finding that General Fox was going one evening to a *soirée* of Miss Martineau's, he invited himself to dine with the General, in order to accompany him. Our political economist thought this somewhat impertinent, while Mr. Hallam regarded it as an honour. And we are disposed to think that Mr. Hallam was right.

A few scraps from her letters will be useful in connection with these remarks. They are all marked by a very superior kind of egotism :—

"I trust this Corn-Law story ['Sowers not Reapers'] will carry me on further, and if it helps to open eyes and soften hearts on the tremendous question which involves millions of lives and centuries of happiness or misery, my birthday will have been well spent in working upon it. To make quite sure, I have for the half-dozenth time compared the summary and the [illegible], and I am certain that the summary [illegible] question, and that the story illustrates [illegible] the summary. I am also sure that [illegible] characters, if I can but keep them [illegible] them all into one number of [illegible] therefore [illegible] the emotion [illegible] retrench the description as much

as possible. Every page shall tell. How singular is the faculty of conception. That Yorkshire vale with its people is become as perfect a real existence to me since yesterday morning as if I had lived there." . . .

"Coleridge told me yesterday that he watches *anxiously* for my numbers from month to month. Can it be that I am paying him in any measure for what he has done for me?" . . .

"Mr. Hallam has just been giving me a comfortable long call. I like him much, with all his contradictiousness. Did I tell you how popular the whole story of Vanderguet is? *i.e.*, Mrs. B. Wood, Mr. William Smith, Mr. Hallam, and many others, love 'Christian' to my heart's content." . . .

"What between the scoffing of the 'Quarterly' and the scepticism of the 'Edinburgh,' the hungry people are ill-fed. I hope a third Quarterly will some day arise, wherein the people may be grounded in the grand truth that faith in God—in His PRINCIPLES—is inseparably connected with faith in man. This will soon happen, now that circumstances are teaching us the utter helplessness of a system of expediency." . . .

"It was a sort of compromise. The Chancellor [Brougham] was there, but went away early. I was

placed between the Chief Justice and Malthus, both of whom were very talkative to me. What a fine face Denman's is!" . . .

"A note from Lady Mary Shepherd this morning, to say she would send the carriage for me between three and four o'clock, which was done. I have had a long, pleasant confab. with Lord Henley, whom I like very much. We had lunch, coffee, and much talk,—we two, Lady Mary, and her daughter. The real object of the interview evidently was to urge me to America instead of on the Continent, when the sense is done." . . .

"Now the plot of my extraordinary life thickens, dearest mother! I can give you no idea of the scramble which is going on for me among *parties*. . What strength they must suppose in me while they bring these conflicting principles to bear upon me! It would not be politic in the Radicals thus to prove me if they did not believe I could stand it; and they stand in respecting me for my independence, as the Tories do under all their sarcasms, and as the Whigs do amidst all their regret for my 'exaltation of sentiment,' and what not. Mr. Fox's mission (she refers to William Fox, the 'Publicola' of the *Weekly Dispatch*, a popular Unitarian lecturer, and platform

orator] is to lead a party, and nobly he discharges it. Mine is to keep aloof from party, to take my stand upon SCIENCE, and declare its truths, leaving it to others to decide whether these be Tory, Whig, or Radical."

In her 'Autobiography,' she writes:—

"At one of Mr. Rogers's breakfasts, I was seated between him and his friend Milman, when the conversation turned on some special case (I forget what) of excessive vanity. I was pitying the person because, whatever flattery he obtained, there was always some censure; and the smallest censure, to the vain, outweighs the largest amount of praise. Milman did not think so, saying that the vain are very happy;—'no people more apt at making themselves happy than the vainest';—'they feed upon their own praises, and dismiss the censure; and, having no heart, they are out of the way of trouble.' I made the obvious remark that if they have no heart they cannot be very happy. Jeffrey's serious assent to this, and remark that it settled the question, discomposed Milman extremely. He set to work to butter his egg and devour it without any reply, and did not speak for some time after. It was amusing that we two heretics should be administering instruction on morals

to a Church dignitary of such eminence as a sacred poet as the Dean of St. Paul's."

As there was nothing in Miss Martineau's very obvious remark to disconcert so clear a thinker and acute a logician as Dean Milman, we must seek some other reason for his discomposure. And we think it is to be found in his knowledge that the clever woman who was pitying so tenderly the vain, was herself a conspicuous member of that *irritabile genus!* Miss Martineau was not altogether without heart, perhaps; but she was sufficiently happy in her intellectual egotism. Her sketches of her contemporaries are very interesting from this point of view. She lays bare their faults and failings with unsparing hand; dissects them with all the warmth of an enthusiast; enlarges on all their weaknesses; and especially on this one of vanity. How she condemns Lady Morgan and Lady Davy, Mrs. Austin and Mrs. Jameson, because their gross and palpable conceits might help to lower the position and discredit the pursuits of other women, while starving out their own [illegible]! Certainly her vanity was not of the [illegible]. It was less frivolous, less a thing of social [illegible] and want. But in its way it was very real and oppressive; it differed in quality rather than in quantity.

We hold that Miss Martineau's egotism led her to what was, in a great measure, a misapplication of her undoubted powers. She wrote tales of political economy, partly because she was sincere in advocating the remedy of the evils she saw around her, and partly because she liked to believe that she was moulding public opinion and influencing legislation. But we doubt very much whether, beyond quickening the interest of the reading classes in economic questions, her fictions had any great effect. It was not her story about the Corn Laws that procured their repeal, or stimulated, or even strengthened the movement against them. Her genius, had it not been expended in this direction, might have done some higher, purer, and more enduring work. We are always disposed to say with Sara Coleridge:—"What a pity it is that, with all her knowledge of child-nature, she should try to persuade herself and others that political economy is a fit and useful study for growing minds and limited capabilities! . . . This same political economy which quickens the sale of her works now, will, I think, prove heavy ballast for a vessel that is to sail down the stream of time." Would she not have done better by teaching her readers to think high thoughts, to live nobly and generously and heroically?

All these principles of pauperism, all these population and cheap food questions, she might well have left to the care of statesmen and the inquiries of practical reformers. For mankind at large their benefit is imaginary. The elevation of humanity must be accomplished by other and profounder agencies. "They are not like religion, which may and must mould the thoughts and acts of every-day life, the true spirit of which, therefore, cannot be too much studied and explained."

In 1834 Miss Martineau started on a visit to the United States. She spent nearly two years in traversing the territories of the Great Republic, and was everywhere received with an enthusiastic welcome. Returning to England in 1836, she recorded her impressions of American society and her views of American institutions in her 'Society in America,' [illegible] and her 'Retrospect of Western Travel.' [illegible] undoubtedly just in the main, are sufficient [illegible] praise to satisfy even the most [illegible] and at the time of their publication [illegible] the irritation which had [illegible] by the lively but somewhat vulgar [illegible] Mrs. Trollope. It is but right, however,

to commend the honesty with which she avows her anti-slavery opinions, which could not then be enunciated without exciting the anger even of the Northern States. It brought upon her no small amount of abuse and contumely; many of those who had previously received her with professed admiration joining in the outcry against her.

Miss Martineau's literary activity was incessant. In 1839 she published 'Deerbrook,' her best novel, which will always be esteemed as a vigorous picture of English life. The tone is high; and if the characters are shadowy, the descriptions are very real, and the interest of the plot is deep and wholesome. John Sterling's criticism of it is brief but happy:—"It is," he says, "really very striking, and parts of it are very true and very beautiful. It is not so true or so thoroughly clear and harmonious among delineations of English middle-class gentility as Miss Austin's books, especially as 'Pride and Prejudice,' which I think exquisite."

We may quote Miss Martineau's frank criticism of it:—

"My own judgment of 'Deerbrook' was for some years more favourable than it is now. The work was faithful in principle and sentiment to the then state of

my mind; and that satisfied me for a time. I should now require more of myself if I were to attempt a novel—(which I should not do if I were sure of living another quarter of a century). I should require more simplicity, and a far more objective character,—not of delineation but of scheme. The laborious portions of meditation, obtruded at intervals, are wholly objectionable in my eyes. Neither morally nor artistically can they be justified. I know the book to have been true to the state of thought and feeling I was then in, which I now regard as imperfect and very far from lofty. I believe it to have been useful, not only in overcoming a prejudice against the use of middle-class life in fiction, but in a more special application to the discipline of temper; and therefore I am glad I wrote it. But I do not think it would be fair to judge me from it, any later than the time in which it was written."

The criticism is more characteristic than the book.

II.

While travelling on the Continent in the spring of 1838, Miss Martineau was seized with a dangerous illness. By slow stages she returned to England, where she settled down near Newcastle-upon-Tyne, to be under the care of her brother-in-law. There she resided for a period of nearly six years. But she did not allow either suffering of mind or body to interfere with her literary work. She gave to the world her second novel, 'The Hour and the Man,' and composed that admirable series of children's tales known by the general title of 'The Playfellow.' These four volumes, 'Settlers at Home,' 'The Picnic,' 'Feats on the Fiord,' and 'The Crofton Boys,' show her at her very best. They are full of fine descriptions, and the story is always told with a vigour that flags not from the first page to the last. Her peculiar condition suggested another book that has won a well-merited

popularity, 'Life in the Sick-room.' While deficient in the hope and consolation that the Christian faith affords, it supplies much useful advice on the lesser modes of maintaining in circumstances of physical trial and moral depression a cheerful and contented spirit. To derive from it the same benefit that Miss Martineau did from the reflections it embodies, the reader would need, however, to possess her intellectual complacency; and at such a cost the advantage would be dearly purchased. Still, it is well worth reading, and its suggestions may be accepted by a Christian, when elevated and purified by his belief in the love of God.

In Crabb Robinson's Diary occur a couple of interesting allusions to it. The first is a quotation from a letter addressed to the diarist by Wordsworth's son-in-law, Mr. Quillinan:—

"They—all the Rydallites—Mr. Wordsworth, Mrs. Wordsworth, and Miss Fenwick—have been quite [illegible] and instructed by the Invalid [illegible] by Moxon, who kept his secret like [illegible] But a woman found it out, for all real— [illegible] after a few pages were read, at [illegible] Miss Martineau's production, [illegible] that you knew all about it, and

caused it to be sent hither. In some of its most eloquent parts it stops short of their wishes and expectations; but they all agree that it is a *rare book*, doing honour to the head and heart of your able and interesting friend. Mr. Wordsworth praised it with more unreserve — I may say, with more *earnestness*— than is usual with him. The serene and heavenly-minded Miss Fenwick was prodigal of her admiration. But Mrs. Wordsworth's was the crowning praise. She said—and you know how she would say it—'I wish I had read exactly such a book as that years ago!' . . . 'It is a *genuine* and touching series of meditations by an invalid, not sick in mind or heart."

As for Mr. Crabb Robinson himself, he says:—

"Miss Martineau has published anonymously a most admirable book, 'Life in the Sick Room.' It unfolds the feelings of those who are condemned to a long seclusion from the world by sickness."

The disease under which she laboured had been pronounced incurable by the most eminent medical men. As a last resort, and at the urgent request of the late Lord Lytton and Mr. Basil Montagu, she was induced to put herself under the treatment of Mr. Spencer Hall, who was then practising

Mesmerism with considerable success. It seems to us that there was much in Miss Martineau's mental idiosyncrasy to render her a suitable subject for mesmeric experiences. However this may be, she recovered under Mr. Spencer Hall's care, and was enabled to enjoy ten years more of health and activity. The particulars of her recovery are given in her 'Letters on Mesmerism;' but they will not help the reader to any accurate comprehension of the phenomena involved. He must take the fact as he finds it. As a general remedy mesmerism has conspicuously failed: in this particular case it eminently succeeded. The conclusion seems obvious that in Miss Martineau's nervous system was found an undeniable *something* which brought it under the absolute control of the operator.

Shortly after her restoration to health, she made the acquaintance of Mr. Atkinson, a "philosophical atheist," and together rather drifted, into an ultra-[illegible], which was characterised by that [illegible] on which we have already [illegible]. A [illegible] correspondence ensued between the [illegible] flattered one another in a very [illegible] manner, congratulating them-[illegible] to the traditions that

dazzled the followers of Christ, and their freedom from all superstitions as to creation and future existence. This correspondence was given to the world in 1851 under the title of 'Letters on the Laws of Man's Nature and Development.' In this disagreeable volume nothing is more striking than the coarseness and inferiority of Mr. Atkinson's share; and the reader is unable to understand how a woman of Miss Martineau's undoubted mental calibre could have found in him an oracle or a guide. As to its speculations, they are vague and even incoherent; and the best friends of Miss Martineau must wish it had never been written. It not only shocked the public, but it erected an impassable barrier between herself and many of her kindred and friends. She says, indeed, that her *genuine* friends did not change, and that the others, failing such a test, were nothing to her; but those who still continued on terms of intimacy belonged to the same materialistic or transcendental school, or else were utterly indifferent to religious considerations.

It is pleasant to turn to a more agreeable subject. On her recovery of health Miss Martineau settled at Ambleside, in the neighbourhood of Wordsworth. Here she built herself a comfortable house, with

poultry-yard, piggery, and cow-shed; managing her household with a skill that provoked the admiration of Mrs. Wordsworth; occupying herself in practical schemes for the benefit of her neighbours; and in all things showing herself the kindly-natured, active, truthful, just, and masterful woman that she was.

In the autumn of 1845 she published her 'Forest and Game-Law Tales;' and in the following year she made a journey to the East, which led to the composition and publication of 'Eastern Life, Past and Present.' Its fresh and finely-coloured word-picture will always be popular, even with those who are not prepared to accept its philosophical speculations. According to Mrs. Chapman, "it harmonizes what is perdurable in the four faiths of Egypt, Sinai, Palestine, and Syria; and shows how the main ideas of moral obligation, strict retribution, the supreme desire of moral good, and the everlasting beauty of holiness are ever passing through all systems, from age to age, [illegible] to themselves all with which they are in a [illegible], and [illegible] annihilating all besides, and [illegible] with [illegible] the whole human race." [illegible] may at once be dismissed [illegible] may agree with a writer in the [illegible] that the book gives fresh interest

to the beaten track of Eastern travel and researches; that its author has put spirit into the dry bones of Champollion, Wilkinson, and Lane.

It is difficult for the biographer to keep pace with the intellectual activity of this remarkable woman. Her work on 'Eastern Travel' was followed in 1849–50 by her 'History of England during the Thirty Years' Peace,' which is not less conspicuous for the impartiality of its tone than for the clearness of its narrative; and this again by her 'Introduction to the History of the Peace, from 1800 to 1815.' In 1853 she produced a careful English condensation of Comte's Positive Philosophy. Meantime, she was a constant contributor to the *Daily News*, for which she wrote in all 1600 articles, and these are, perhaps, the most striking proof of her many-sided ability, robust good sense, and literary skill. In the early volumes of *Household Words* many of the best papers are from her practical and always vigorous pen; and her secession from that journal was unquestionably a blow to its prosperity and influence. It was due to the rejection by the editors of a tale in which she had represented ['The Missionary'] a Jesuit as an intelligent and benevolent man;

whereas "No Popery" was the motto adopted by Charles Dickens and his coadjutor, Mr. Wills.

"Mr. Wills and Mr. Dickens said they never would publish anything, fact or fiction, which gave a favourable view of any one under the influence of the Roman Catholic faith. This appeared to me incredible that Mr. Dickens gave [illegible] three times over, with all possible distinctness, that there should be any mistake; he would [illegible] nothing which could possibly [illegible] whatever in favour of Romanism, even [illegible] In vain I [illegible] all [illegible] the Christian era [illegible] I pointed out that [illegible] was [illegible] as a Jesuit [illegible] where Romanism [illegible] Mr. Dickens [illegible] and that

I had never before felt so disposed to make popularly known all historical facts in their favour. I hope I need not add that the editors never for a moment supposed that my remonstrance had any connexion with the story in question being written by me. They knew me too well to suppose that such a trifle as my personal interest in the acceptance or rejection of the story had anything to do with my final declaration that my confidence and comfort in regard to 'Household Words' were gone, and that I could never again write fiction for them, nor anything in which principle or feeling were concerned."

This incident was as honourable to Miss Martineau's sense of justice as it was discreditable to the bigotry or commercial spirit of the conductors of *Household Words*. As a judicious critic writes, she had a real largeness of heart and liberality of mind, and probably would have been one of the very few capable of genuine toleration. And it would be hardly fair to say that this toleration was partly due to her conviction that *all* creeds were equally mistaken.

In the midst of all her activity she was suddenly struck down by disease of the heart, and her doctors

warned her to prepare for death at any moment. She received the warning with the utmost composure, and proceeded to write and print the autobiography, to which we have been so largely indebted. She lived, however, for twenty years longer. The sword was continually suspended over her head; but her cheerfulness and patience never gave way, and she continued to entertain her friends and admirers, to cherish all her old interest in public life, and, when her health permitted, to busy herself in literary labour, with a heroism which, though not animated by Christian hope, it is impossible not to admire. Who can refuse the sympathy which Mr. Matthew Arnold has expressed in his eloquent verse?—

"[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]

"Turn, O Death, on the vile,
Turn on the foolish the stroke
Hanging now o'er a head
Active, beneficent, pure!
But if the prayer be in vain,
But if the stroke must fall,
Her whom we cannot save,
What might we say to console? . . .

"Myrtle and rose fit the young,
Laurel and oak the mature,
Private affections for those
Have run their circle and left
Space for things far from themselves,
Thoughts of the general weal,
Country and public cares:
Public cares which move
Seldom and faintly the depth
Of younger passionate souls,
Plunged in themselves, who demand
Only to live by the heart,
Only to love, and be loved."

Among her latest works we may mention a brief treatise on the 'Factory Controversy,' 1855; a 'History of the American Compromise,' 1856; a brilliant historical sketch of 'British Rule in India';

'England and her Soldiers'; 'Health, Handicraft, and Husbandry'; and 'Household Education.' In these, as in all her writings, she was always on the side of whatever was practical, liberal, and just. A offer of a pension, which had been made by Lord Melbourne during her first illness, was renewed by Mr. Gladstone in 1873. It was respectfully declined on the ground that her literary exertions had secured her a modest independence.

Though long unable to leave her two rooms in the picturesquely situated cottage at Ambleside, she was confined to one for a fortnight only; and she rose and dressed, though with increasing difficulty, till within a few days of the end. Her biographer notes that she kept her household books, and superintended the management of her household, to the last, and those who waited upon her say that through her latest hours she preserved the genial and playful temper which had been so attractive in her earlier time. Somewhat of her mental and bodily condition while she was passing into the shadow are afforded in the letter which she wrote, just before her death, to her confidential correspondent, Mrs. Chapman and Miss Martineau.—

"Dearest friend," she writes to the former, on the 17th of May, 1876, "I am *very ill* . . . The difficulty and distress to me are the state of the head. I will only add that the condition grows daily worse, so that I am scarcely able to converse or read, and the cramp in the hands makes writing difficult or impossible; so I must try to be content with the few lines I can send, till the few days become none. We believe that time to be near; and we shall not attempt to deceive you about it. My brain feels under the constant sense of being *not myself*, and the introduction of this new fear into my daily life makes each day sufficiently trying to justify the longing for death which grows upon me more and more. I feel sure of your sympathy about this. You enter into my longing for rest, I am certain; and when you hear, some day soon, that I have sunk into my long sleep, you will feel it as the removal of a care, and as a relief on my account."

This is sad indeed; but what follows is sadder. She is writing to Mr. Atkinson, May 19th:—

"I have no cares or troubles beyond the bodily uneasiness (which, however, I don't deny to be an evil). I cannot think of any future as at all probable, except 'the annihilation' from which some people recoil with so much horror. I find myself here in the

universe,—I know not how, whence, or why. I see everything in the universe go out and disappear, and I see no reason for supposing that it is not an actual and entire death. And for *my* part, I have no objection to such an extinction. I well remember the passion with which W. E. Forster said to me, 'I had rather be damned than annihilated.' If he once felt five minutes' damnation, he would be thankful for extinction in preference. The truth is, I care little about it any way. Now that the event draws near, and that I see how fully my household expect my death pretty soon, the universe opens so widely before my view, and I see the old notions of death and scenes to fall so [illegible] so merely human,—so impossible to be true, when [illegible] glances through the range of science,—that I see [illegible] to be done but to wait, without fear or hope [illegible] prejudice, for the expiration of life. I have [illegible] further experience, nor have I any fear [illegible] Under the weariness of illness I long to be [illegible] I have not set my mind on any state [illegible] all this represents [illegible] at all [illegible] I think it [illegible], while we are yet fully aware how [illegible] we have [illegible] universe and the [illegible]

It would be uncharitable to criticize too severely the moribund utterances of a woman in Harriet Martineau's physical condition. But we may well ask why, apart from all reference to the Christian Revelation, "the old notions of death and scenes to follow" should be "so merely human" anymore than her own cherished theory of annihilation? And when she admits that we have but a glimpse of the universe and the life it contains, why should she not accept the *possibility* of a future life as part of the scheme of that universe? We find it difficult to enter into the mental self-satisfaction which could regard extinction with such real (or professed) indifference. It is certainly a curious psychological trait that a woman of so much intellectual restlessness and energy should have actually desired an entire cessation of thought and imagination and fancy. That a mind so quick and pregnant should yearn after a state in which that mind would cease to be, implies a singular contradiction. There are many without the Christian's faith who cherish nevertheless the Christian's hope; and such seem to us happier and wiser than the advocates of the miserable creed of Agnosticism. A miserable creed in very truth; a creed without a Divine Father, without a Personal Saviour, without the consoling and purifying influence of a Holy

Spirit! A creed without the promise of an eternity of love! This is Harriet Martineau's "last of the mythologies"; but had she known it in all its fulness, had she appreciated it in all its beauty, had she ascertained it in all its truth, how much higher would have been her standard, and how much more precious a legacy would have been the example of her life!

"The world as it is," she writes, "is growing somewhat dim before my eyes; but the world as it is to be looks brighter every day." Brighter it will assuredly become; but only through that "last of the mythologies" which Harriet Martineau never understood, but without which she would never have been what she was. Oh, the pity of it that in the sublimity of her intellectual egotism she never humbled herself to receive the Truth! Yet she could not escape wholly from its influence. Her ethical system was that which Christianity alone has made possible. Her very aspirations for the welfare of the race, for the good of her fellow-beings, witness to the power of Christian teaching. His Christ never lived and died as man, and risen again as God, [illegible] a position she could never have entertained [illegible]. Man has risen high above the [illegible] of which he [illegible] and now, in [illegible]

vanity, he would fain ignore the Divine Ladder which enabled him to ascend.

Harriet Martineau died on the 27th of June, 1876, aged 74; and sleeps with her kindred in the old cemetery at Birmingham.

THE END.

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